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By Rev J. Chaplin
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"TO DAIMONION,"

OR

THE SPIRITUAL MEDIUM.

ITS

NATURE ILLUSTRATED BY THE HISTORY OF ITS UNIFORM MYSTERIOUS MANIFESTATION WHEN UNDULY EXCITED.

IN TWELVE FAMILIAR LETTERS TO AN INQUIRING FRIEND.

BY

TRAVERSE OLDFIELD.

—"διετεθρύλλητο γὰρ, ὡσ φαίη Σωκράτης, τὸ δαιμόνιον ἑαυτῷ σημαινειν." [For it was the common report that Socrates said, *the daemon* communicated with him.] — *Xenophon's Memorabilia.*

"Haec * * ab authoribus ac monumentis vetustissimis * * excerpsimus; * * medium rerum esse spiritum mundi." [This we have gathered from authors and monuments the most ancient, that the *medium of existences* is the *spirit of the universe.*] — *Scholiast of the Middle Ages.*

"The people therefore that stood by, and heard it, said that *it thundered*; others said, *An angel spake to him.*" — *John's Gospel.*

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Rev J. Chaplin
Nov. 18, 1876

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THE WRITER TO HIS READER.

Your eye, attracted by the title of this little volume, is now turned to this page. The answering glance that looks up to meet yours is that of a friend. He greets you, and asks the favor of a brief familiar conference.

Very likely it is one whose *practical common sense* is his guide; and, though you care very little for "spiritual manifestations," you would read a short letter on the subject, if it seems to the point. Perchance it is one of *meditative* cast, bewildered in revery on "spiritual mysteries;" and you long for sympathy from one of kindred spirit. It may be a once believing,

hopeful *Christian*, broken loose from the mooring-rock of his faith, driven from the anchorage of former hopes, tossed now by every wind of doctrine, doubting the chart of your fathers' trust, and doubting more the compass of your own reason; and you would gladly hail a brother voyager who will lay by a while to compare reckonings.

Reader, of whatever class you may be, let "Traverse Oldfield" find you "an inquiring friend." Allow as your own the address "My Dear Charles," and read as your own these "Familiar Letters."

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Letter First.

THE NATURE OF THE SPIRITUAL MEDIUM NOT TO BE EXPLAINED.

"Hoc sum contentus, quod, etiam si quomodo quidque fiat ignorem, quid fiat intelligo. Pro omni divinatione idem * * respondebo. * * Quid! de fulgurum vi, dubitare num possunt? nonne cum multa alia mirabilia, tunc illud in primis? * * Causarum enim ignoratio in re nova mirationem facit: eadem ignoratio, si in rebus usitatis est, non miramur." — *Cicero de Divinatione*, I., 9, 10, & II., 22.

[With this I am content, that even if I am ignorant in what way anything happens, what does happen I know. In reference to every kind of divination I will reply the same. What! can we doubt as to power of lightnings? Is it not so that while there are many other things wonderful, this is among the first? * * For ignorance of causes in a new occurrence produces wonder: the same ignorance, if it exists in common occurrences, we do not wonder at.]

Sympathy for the Inquirer. — Repulsive Replies of some. — Hint in College Days. — Future Study of the Ancients. — No Fact Explained. — Science only Classifies. — Spiritual Knowledge most Limited. — Three Developments in "Spiritual Rappings." — The "Tapping, Writing and Speaking" Media. — Object, to find a General Law.

My Dear Charles:

I am glad you have written so freely of your observations and inquiries, of your doubts and difficulties, in reference to the "Spiritual Rappings." Be assured you have one that knows how to sympathize with you; a friend whose own mind has been struggling for years through the mist, seeking a rock to stand upon; and

who, with a shipwrecked comrade's eagerness, delights to reach a hand or to fling a rope to the aid of a brother yet tossed on the billows of an unsettled faith, and if possible to help him to a foot-hold.

What a pity it is that youth too often doubt the sincerity or the ability of their elder, and, therefore, more experienced, comrades in the voyage of life! Too often the aged and experienced, and even the intelligent and learned, do not enter into the mental trials of inquiring youth; they do not give themselves time to come back to their own early years, and to recall to mind their own days of doubt and uncertainty. Absorbed in their own particular pursuits, they listen with but half an ear to half the story; and they have not time nor patience to give the reasons of their own instinctive decision, — that, *though mysterious*, there is for these wonders of our day a *natural* though *unexplained* cause. Sometimes, also, the man of matured views on these subjects replies too abruptly when questioned; responding with one or the other of these two curt declarations, according as his temperament is secular or religious, — "It is all *humbug*," — or, "It is all *from the devil*." But, Charles, do not distrust therefore the heart or the head, the feeling or the conviction, of your experienced and intelligent friends. They may be hasty in assigning the *ultimate cause* of these phenomena which perplex you; and yet they may be right in the main conviction, that there is nothing *supernatural* in them.

Nearly twenty years since, the first experiments in "Mesmerism" were agitating our community. In the

city near by our university, lecturers were performing nightly; and one of my own classmates was a successful operator. Our scientific professor visited and witnessed these exhibitions. Eagerly one morning, when on the subject that called it up, did we watch for the views of our acute Professor of Physiology. From that morning the conviction rested on some of our minds, that in all the phenomena relating to *spiritual media* there is the working of a wondrous power in our nature, mysterious, indeed, and unexplained, yet *not supernatural*. It is not delusion nor the devil; not, on the one hand, all deception, nor, on the other hand, a supernatural influence wrought by an evil agent. As, in interested survey, histories of the past and thrilling scenes in other lands have since added their clustering confirmations, a lengthening chain of past testimonials, and a widening web of now witnessed facts, has seemed to invest as with the robe and insignia of truth the chance thought of the college lecture-room. In every land and every age, by men most renowned in science and letters, by Franklin and Hale, by Galen, Pliny and Cicero, by Plato, Socrates and Zoroaster, as well as by Luke and Paul and Moses, mysterious manifestations of the *spiritual medium* were beheld, wondered at and commented on; and, with an accordance of idea greater than their language at first indicates, a *cause in the nature of things* has been suggested.

You ask, Charles, that the phenomena of the "spiritual rappings" be *explained*. Will you let me remind you of two things, before we begin our examination?

No phenomenon in nature, either in the material or spiritual world, ever has been or ever will be *explained* to us while we are in this life. Science itself even *explains* nothing; it only *classifies* phenomena, drawing out the law or order of sequence, according to which events occur, but not *accounting for* the law. In the *material* world facts in many a field of inquiry have been grouped and generalized; but no one fact has really been accounted for. Every plant now growing is every hour taking up from the soil through its roots, and in from the air through its leaves, chemical ingredients, with which it is building itself up; actually creating, every moment, particles of matter into root, stalk, leaf and flower. Everybody sees it; science classifies the phenomena; but who ever thinks of explaining the process? In the fields of spiritual investigation, in *mental* science, how much less has been accomplished! While every year some new principle of material things is discovered, or some new application of natural law is made to the arts of human life, philosophers in their examination of our spiritual being seem to have noted no more facts, to have fixed no more settled conclusions, to have demonstrated no more positive laws, than were known and recorded by the ancient wise men of Greece and Rome, and even of India and Egypt. Expect not, then, my young friend, that the "*spiritual rappings*" will be *explained* to you. There are limits to human knowledge. A very Newton has to stop on the shore even of *material* investigation, and he must be content to be but a boy picking

up a few pebbles, while the whole ocean of truth lies unexplored beyond. And as to researches in the *spiritual* world, that is plunging beneath the surface, into the ocean, where we have no eye to see with. God has hidden all these dark depths from us, now creatures of sense, meaning that the study shall in another life have a freshness of interest; when his own Son's promise will be realized, "What thou knowest not now, thou shalt know hereafter." Bear in mind, then, if we can but trace in human nature, in other ages and nations, developments similar to these of the spiritual rappings, if we can see enough in them to satisfy ourselves that they are not *super*-natural, but *natural*, that they are not communications from disembodied spirits, but mysterious yet universal workings of our own spiritual and nervous organism, we shall have arrived at all which even science can hope to attain.

It is the "*spiritual rappings*" in which you are interested, and which you wish explained. You are aware, however, that this term was applied to the first development of the mysterious agency, whose working is now so extensively observed and wondered at. It has now come to be synonymous with the wider expression, *spiritual communications*. There are now thought to be three distinct modes of communication with disembodied spirits. There is the *tapping* (or rapping) medium; through which communications are supposed to be given by taps on a table; two or three successive indicating *assent*, or the presence of a spirit; particular messages being received by the inquirer's touching suc-

cessively the letters of the alphabet printed on a card, noting those when touched which are responded to by the tappings, and writing down such letters in order, until words and sentences are thus obtained. There is, again, "the *writing* medium," the man or woman influenced seeming to lose control of the right arm, when the pen or pencil is taken; and the hand being driven up and down and over the paper in confused scrawls, or in irregular letters and lines, making out intelligible or unintelligible words and sentences. There is, finally, "the *speaking* medium," the person influenced being lost in a swoon or trance, and then uttering strange and unaccountable sentiments and expressions. Moreover, it is now asserted as the teaching of these media, that the scenes of the Salem witchcraft, so called, were the attempts of the spirits in another world to make their presence known, and to convey communications to the living. It is also intimated that they may be found to have a connection with other mysterious phenomena of a similar nature, which have occurred in the history of our race. You will perceive, therefore, that an investigation of one branch of this subject requires a notice of all its branches, as now they appear; and, moreover, a judgment formed as to the developments of our day must have reference to those of other days also.

It will be a thrilling, if not a pleasing adventure, to travel over the past, tracing back sometimes through the obscure by-paths of ancient history the footprints marked by the feet of men long gone from earth. It will be instructive to seek out some general law, deep-

seated and universal in human nature, which may make these mysterious and now appalling developments to appear the familiar though unexplained occurrences of other lands and ages; developments which need not be either dreaded or trusted, as the communications of *evil* or of *good* spirits, unseen around us; but which may be admired as God's wondrous gift to us whom he has fearfully and wondrously made; a gift to be studied with humility, and to be experimented upon with caution.

Letter Second.

THE EXISTENCE OF THE SPIRITUAL MEDIUM, AND ITS EXCESSIVE, DEFICIENT, OR EQUABLE DEVELOPMENT.

"Quae omnia, si a nobis non videantur, non creduntur; sed tentata certificant. Quorum enim actio ex proprietate est, rationibus unde sit, comprehendi non potest. Rationibus autem tantum comprehenduntur, quae sensibus subministrantur. Aliquand' ergo quaedam substantiae habent proprietatem ratione incomprehensibilem propter sui subtilitatem, sensibus non subminiinistratum propter magnam sui altitudinem."— *Galen on the Power of Incantation in Healing.*

[All which things, unless they are seen by us, they are not believed. For the action of these influences is from a property the principles of whose origin we cannot comprehend. In their principles, indeed, only those things are comprehended which affect the senses. Sometimes, therefore, certain substances have a property in its principle incomprehensible, on account of its subtilty, not affecting the senses because it is so deep seated.]

"Of the *nature* of the nervous principle we are as ignorant as of the nature of light and of electricity; but with its *properties* we are nearly as well acquainted as with those of light, or other imponderable agents."— *Muller's Physiology.*

The Intermediate Agent between Matter and Spirit. — Allusions of the Ancients to it. — From Franklin's Day to Herschel's supposed to be Electricity. — The Nervous Principle as now understood. — Akin to Electricity. — Mode of its Action. — Excessive, Deficient, and Equable Development.

My Dear Charles:

Let me, at this stage of our inquiry, recall to you some acknowledged principles of physiology and of mental science, as to the medium by which our spirits are united to our bodies, and as to the excessive, deficient or equable action of the one upon the other.

There is, so say physiologists, a *medium* by which

soul and body are united and act on each other; an *intermediate* agent, neither spirit nor matter, through which the mind controls the various members of the body, and by which the bodily senses convey their impressions to the secret soul. When I will to grasp an object with my hand, some mysterious agent runs from the mind's laboratory in the brain, and coursing along the nerves, like the electric fluid along the telegraph wires, contracts muscle after muscle, just at the instant of time, and up to the precise extent, demanded for the successful movement. How obedient and dutiful a servant that mysterious messenger, thus prompt to do my bidding! How mighty the power which can cause a cord of muscular fibres so to shrink as to draw up a hundred pounds weight! I ought to be prepared to see wondrous movements and wondrous powers exhibited, when a peculiar excitement wakes it to action.

As to the nature and properties of this mysterious agent even the ancients wrote; and men in the old and eastern climes have known more of its secret powers than we have learned.

As early as the time of the first great Greek physician, Hippocrates, who lived 430 years before Christ, the intermediate agent was virtually recognized under the name φυσις, from which our word physical is derived. To this all the movements of the body were ascribed; a sort of intelligence even being attributed to it.[1] Pure

[1] See "An Elementary System of Physiology, by John Bostock, M.D., F.R.S., &c. Boston, 1825." Vol. I., Introd. pp. 2—4; also chap. IV., § 2, p. 201.

spirit was distinguished from this under the name ψυχη;[1] showing that even the early Greek mind recognized an agent intermediate between spirit and matter; to which, as we shall see, the mysteries of the "spiritual medium" were referred.[2] Aristotle three hundred and eighty-four years before Christ, and Galen, one hundred and thirty-one years after Christ, followed up the suggestion of their earlier leader. The Romans made a similar distinction between the words *anima* and *animus*, when used in contrast.[3] The former was with them an *intermediate principle* between matter and spirit; and to it, as we shall see, they referred, to a certain extent at least, the phenomena which even now are mysterious.[4] Descartes revived this theory; and from his day the doctrine of "the animal spirits" was regarded a feature of the philosophy called "*Cartesian.*" As Bostock remarks, "About two centuries ago everything that could not be otherwise explained was referred to the agency of some kind of refined spirit."[5] Yet, before his day, so universal in the east was the belief in an intermediate agent through spirit which acted on matter, that it formed the very basis of the famed Jewish system called the "*Cabbala;*" the Hebrew name "*Sephiroth*" being used to express those intermediate principles which

[1] See Leverett's Latin Lexicon, under *anima*.

[2] See Letter VIII., pp. 87, 92.

[3] Leverett's Lexicon, on these words, with his quotations from Pliny, Juvenal, Seneca, Cicero, &c.; also Bostock's Physiol., vol. I., p. 4.

[4] See Letter VI., pp. 62, 66; VII., pp. 77, 83.

[5] Bostock's Physiol., vol. I., chap. IV, § 2, p. 201.

run through the universe, having their masculine and feminine, or active and passive; by which man's soul is united to his body, by which God operates on matter, and by which man gains a knowledge of God.[1]

Since Franklin discovered the laws of electric phenomena, and Galvani observed how the magnetic fluid contracts the muscles, physiologists have made the medium by which the mind acts on the body a special study. The results of the investigations made up to about twenty years ago Herschel thus stated:

"Among the remarkable effects of electricity disclosed by the researches of Galvani and Volta, perhaps the most so consisted in its influence on the nervous system of animals. The origin of muscular motion is one of those profound mysteries of nature which we can scarcely venture to hope will ever be fully explained. Physiologists, however, had long entertained a general conception of the conveyance of some subtle fluid, or spirit, from the brain to the muscles of animals, along the nerves; and the discovery of the rapid transmission of electricity along conductors, with the violent effects produced by shocks, transmitted through the body, on the nervous system, would very naturally lead to the idea that this nervous fluid, if it had any real existence, might be no other than the electrical. But, until the discoveries of Galvani and Volta, this could be only looked upon as a vague conjecture. The character of a *vera causa* was wanting, to give it any degree of rational

[1] See Bibliotheca Sacra, July, 1852, art. VII.

plausibility, since no reason could be imagined for the disturbance of the electrical equilibrium in the animal frame, composed as it is entirely of conductors; or, rather, it seemed contrary to the then known laws of electrical communication to suppose any such. Yet one strange and surprising phenomenon might be adduced indicative of the possibility of such disturbance, namely, the powerful shock given by the *torpedo*, and other fishes of the same kind, which presented so many analogies with those arising from electricity, that they could hardly be referred to a different source, though, besides the shock, neither spark nor any other indication of electrical tension could be detected in them.

"The benumbing effect of the *torpedo* had been ascertained to depend on certain singularly constructed organs, composed of membranous columns, filled from end to end with laminæ, separated from each other by a fluid; but of its mode of action no satisfactory account could be given, nor was there anything in its construction, and still less in the nature of its materials, to give the least ground for supposing it an electrical apparatus. But the pile of Volta supplied at once the analogies both of structure and effect, so as to leave little doubt of the electrical nature of the apparatus, or of the power, — a most wonderful one, certainly, — of the animal, to determine, by an effort of its will, that concurrence of conditions on which its activity depends.

"This remained, as it probably ever will remain, mysterious and inexplicable; but, the principle once established that there exists in the animal economy a power of

determining the development of electric excitement, capable of being transmitted along the nerves, and it being ascertained, by numerous and decisive experiments, that the transmission of Voltaic electricity along the nerves of even a dead animal is sufficient to produce the most violent muscular action, it became an easy step to refer the origin of muscular motion in the living frame to a similar cause; and to look to the brain, a wonderfully constructed organ, for which no mode of action possessing the least plausibility had ever been devised, as the source of the required electrical power."[1]

The views thus expressed by Herschel have been slightly modified since he wrote; not, however, so as to alter at all their practical bearing on our inquiry. Dr. Müller, the great German physiologist, distinguishes between animal electricity, which is developed on the surface of the body (as in a cat), and the nervous energy which is generated in the brain; his experiments having led to a satisfactory conclusion, that the two differ in their nature, though not in the general laws of their action. Of animal electricity, developed on the *surface* of the human body, he mentions, among others, these facts: that in *men*, who are healthy, it is generally *positive;* that in women, it is *negative* oftener than it is in men, though no general rule exists; that it is more easily excited in persons of a sanguine temperament, and less in those of a phlegmatic disposition; and that it is

[1] "A Preliminary Discourse on the Study of Natural Philosophy, by John F. W. Herschel, Esq., A.M., &c. Philadelphia, 1835." Part III., chap. VI., pp. 255, 6 & 7.

developed in a greater degree in the evening than during the day.[1] The substance of his investigation, as to the agent by which the mind acts on the body, is condensed in these sentences at the close of his lengthy discussion: "The laws of the action of the nervous principle are different from electricity. Of the *nature* of the nervous principle we are as ignorant as of the nature of light and of electricity; but with its *properties* we are nearly as well acquainted as with those of light, and of other imponderable agents."[2] Of the manner in which the nervous principle acts he says: "The primitive fibres of all the voluntary nerves being at their central extremity, all spread out in the brain to receive the influence of the will, we may compare them, as they lie side by side in the organ of the mind, to the keys of a piano, on which our thoughts play or strike, and thus give rise to currents or vibrations of the nervous principle in a certain number of primitive nervous fibres, and consequently to motions."[3]

By this mysterious union, our minds are thus linked to our bodies. Through this medium the mind acts upon the body, employing, to a greater or less extent, the organs of sense to gain spiritual apprehensions. And according as the development of this agent has been excessive, deficient or equable, in men, so have their views of the sources of human knowledge ever varied.

[1] Elements of Physiology, by J. Müller, M.D.; translated from the German, by Wm. Baly, M.D. London, 1838. See Introduction.

[2] Müller's Physiol., B. III., § 1, chap. 3.

[3] Ibid, B. III., § 3, chap. 1.

How far the mind is dependent on the body has always been a question among thinking men. On this question mental philosophers have in all ages been ranged under three great classes; according as they have regarded the *bodily senses* alone, or the *spirit's intuitions* only, or the *union of both these*, as the ultimate source of our knowledge.[1] In each of these classes, as professed adherents to these several views, have been ranked in every age and nation the prominent and noblest minds. To one or the other of these classes have really and practically belonged the mass of men in every community and generation, though they never have read a book on mental science, nor even have imagined that there is any law on which their own minds act.

To the *first* class generally belong the reflective men among the educated; men who love to live within themselves, communing with their own thoughts, or with one of kindred spirit; shrinking from society, where they meet so much that is harsh and uncongenial; and having little to do with the material world, except to admire the beauty of its varied scenes and myriad objects, while they love not to bend their sinews to draw profit from it. To this class belong a numerous band among our merchants, artisans and laborers, whose hands only are

[1] For an exhibition of these three classes among the ancients, Hindoos, Greeks, &c., see "Epitome of the History of Philosophy," translated from the French by C. S. Henry, D.D. New York, 1842;" especially pp. 61 and 185. In confirmation of the general statement, see Cousin's History of Modern Philosophy, translated by H. O. Wight; 2d series, 2d vol., § 12.

employed in their necessary pursuits, while their minds are dwelling on principles and laws beyond and above their pursuits. It is truth unappreciated by the senses such love to contemplate; the mysterious properties, the hidden laws which govern nature, the moving causes acting in the world of both matter and mind. In searching for and deciding upon spiritual truth, therefore, in seeking for knowledge of God and of the spirit-world, such minds naturally turn to and rely upon those same sources of investigation which they most love to employ. They employ and trust their own spiritual intuitions.

To the *second* class are to be referred the dogmatical among the educated, and the merely mechanical among business men; minds which are interested only in their own particular pursuits; intellects which demand a mathematical demonstration for everything they receive; men who can hardly believe anything, except what they themselves or some other credible witness has seen, and who, when they think of God and religious things, admit nothing but what their parents have taught, or their church has maintained, or they themselves have scanned on the surface of the word of God. In the *third* class move the mighty phalanx of men who both think and act, who both observe and reflect, and whose religion is both of the heart and the head.

Remark, now, Charles, the conclusions to which we are brought bearing on the subject of our investigation. There is a spiritual medium. There is an intermediate agent by which mind acts on matter, and which is itself

neither mind nor matter. This agent, the nervous principle, is in this respect to be ranked with the other attracting and repelling forces of nature, as the capillary, gravitating, magnetic, and electrical forces. In many of the modes of its operation, it is similar to the magnetic and electrical principles; having probably its negative and its positive, an attracting and a repelling power, which may either balance each other, or overbalance and control one the other. The nervous principle is moreover developed together with animal electricity; the two being together abundant in persons of strongly nervous temperament, and the two being developed so as to overcharge the system of the person who is under great excitement of body or mind. Knowing, then, Charles, the mysterious powers of electricity, so long regarded as supernatural, — powers which even now are exciting new amazement when seen in the electric telegraph, locomotive, &c., — what wonders ought we not to be prepared to see in the working of that more subtle agent, "the nervous principle"?

Letter Third.

POSSIBLE LAWS OF THE SPIRITUAL MEDIUM, ILLUSTRATED IN "ANIMAL MAGNETISM."

"In Gallia Druidae sunt; e quibus ipse Diviaticum Aeduum, hospitem tuum laudatoremque cognovi: qui et naturae rationem, quam physiologiam appellant, notam esse sibi profitebatur; and partim auguriis, partim conjectura quae essent futura dicebat." — *Cicero de Divinatione.*

[In Gaul are the Druids; one of whom, Diviaticus the Aeduan, thy guest and eulogizer, I myself knew: who professed that a principle of nature which the Greeks call physiology was known to himself, and partly by auguries, partly by conjecture, he told things which would come to pass.]

"Of the nature of the nervous principle we are as ignorant as of the nature of electricity; but with its properties we are nearly as well acquainted as with those of light, and of other imponderables." — *Muller.*

Possible Principles an Illustration. — The Nervous Principle possibly has the Laws of Electricity and Magnetism. — Electricity affects the Senses; so the Nervous Principle. — Impression varies with Constitution. — Three Classes seen in Joan of Arc. — The Natural of one Supernatural to another. — Electricity attracts Objects, and passes over Connected Conductors; and so may the Nervous Principle. — Report of the Royal Academy on Mesmerism. — "A Special Agent." — This the Nervous Principle. — Statement of Cuvier. — The Clairvoyant the Magnetic Telegraph of the Inquirer. — Agreement of Prof. Gregory and other Mesmerists.

My Dear Charles:

It would be presumptuous to attempt to theorize about an agent whose nature and whose laws the ablest physiologists have been able but partially to comprehend. Yet, avoiding that folly, we may with propriety

glance at some possible principles which comparison suggests, and which experience and history seem to attest. They will be but unpretending suggestions; hinted as illustrations, not as explanations, which, if unsound, will harm no one, but which, if only plausible, may give us the calm confidence that the mysterious spiritual manifestations often beheld are not supernatural; they are the natural working of a known though uncomprehended intermediate agent.

If the nervous principle belong to the class of agents intermediate between spirit and matter, to which electricity and magnetism are referred, why should not the one have properties similar to the other, and produce like effects? Certainly it is a probable suggestion; and a long array of facts, extending through the world's history, may tend to confirm the supposition to be at least plausible. The *possibility* of such a similarity is enough for our purpose.

Electricity and magnetism, when developed so as to surcharge a substance, become *appreciable to the bodily senses*. The sense of sight, of hearing, of taste, of smell, and of feeling, and the muscular sense, are all affected by their action. Why should it not be thus with the nervous principle when over-excited? The eye of the person thus affected may see real visions, and his ear hear real sounds; he may have the actual taste of sweet or bitter, and the actual smell of pleasant or unpleasant odors; and his touch may suffer a positive pang, and his muscles feel a positive pressure. The impression produced on the senses by the action of the

nervous principle may be precisely that which the corresponding material substance would produce. In confirmation of these hints, the following statement of Müller may suffice: — "The sensation produced by the electric shock is not peculiar to that agent; it may be produced by any strong excitement of the nerves, whether mechanical or mental. Kastner relates that in writing he frequently sustains slight shocks in the fingers. Some years ago, when I was laboring under a state of nervous excitability, I had this sensation very frequently on using the fingers much." [1]

The mental impression which this over-action of the nervous principle produces on any individual will vary according to his intellectual constitution. If he be of acute mental organism, belonging to the first of the three classes already mentioned, he will regard them as supernatural, — actual spiritual manifestations. If he be of the grosser, more physical make, his blunt nervous susceptibilities may not be affected even in the slightest degree like those of his fellow of finer mould; and he will regard the impression of the other as a mere delusion. The mind of more even balance may appreciate both the earthly and the spiritual element; and will refer them to a real but natural influence, produced by the intermediate agency of the nervous principle. As a clear and striking example of this truth, the interesting instance seen in Joan of Arc may be cited.[2] She lived

[1] Müller's Physiol., translated by Baly, B. III., sect. I., chap. III., p. 640.

[2] See Histoire de France, par M. Michelet, Paris, 1841; Tome V. chap. III.

in the midst of war and of political agitation;[1] and, as the whole history of mankind shows, any season of excitement, especially such excitement as war produces, creates a general over-development of the nervous principle; hence an excess of spiritual manifestations impressing the senses; and hence a more than ordinary belief in supernatural influences. Joan herself, a person of most estimable character, a heroine, whose name is on every child's lip in France, as that of Washington is in America, the first in patriotism and piety, and the first in the hearts of her countrymen,[2] — Joan herself, and a class of minds like hers, believed that the visions she saw and the voices she heard came from celestial beings.[3] The dull, unimpressible brain of her hard-working father, and that of others like him, could see nothing and feel nothing of those refined influences; and he verily thought it all delusion.[4] Minds that could appreciate most thoroughly both these elements regarded it as a natural though real power, acting upon and through the inspired heroine; a power to be admired in certain circumstances, because it accomplishes what

[1] Michelet's Histoire de France, Tom. V., pp. 46, 47. The philosophic Shakspeare pictures only the strongly excited as seeing and hearing ghosts; the nervous excitement gradually being aroused in mind after mind, till many see the same.— See *Macbeth* and *Hamlet*.

[2] In the Protestant Sabbath-schools of France, when the children are called on to give an example of patriotism, the name of "Jeanne d'Arc" will break from every lip.

[3] Michelet's Histoire de France, Tom. V., pp. 50—55.

[4] Do., p. 58.

well-balanced reason cannot; a power to be deprecated always, since the person who possesses it is powerless in all points but one, and if such an affection were prevalent in a body of men, as in the crusading host following Peter the Hermit, only one of the elements of success would be theirs.

Electricity and the magnetic influence, also, when so developed as to surcharge a substance, *pass off that substance to another* placed near them, attracting or repelling external objects, and imparting to them their magnetic or electrical condition. The *magnet* attracts iron only, and imparts to it its own power, thus controlling its magnetic influence. An *electrified* body attracts other substances than iron, as pieces of paper, of wood, &c., and imparts to them its power; thus controlling their electrical influence. Why, then, may not the nervous principle pass over, from a person over-charged with it, to other bodies and to other persons, so as to attract or repel inanimate objects, and to control the nervous energies of other animals and persons? Surely, Charles, the suggestion is not a merely fanciful one, since the animal electricity, developed with the nervous principle, might be expected to exhibit these phenomena.

As now we seek to apply these two suggestions of a possible analogy between the action of the nervous principle and that of electricity and magnetism, bear always in mind, Charles, it is not at all a scientific explanation which is attempted. If, however, only a possible illustration be adduced, it will be enough to show that all

the facts of "spiritual manifestations" may some day be traced to a natural law of the action of the nervous principle.

When Mesmer, having come in 1778 from Vienna to Paris, had for five or six years kept all Paris in an excitement by his experiments, the king at length appointed a commission consisting of five members of the Royal Academy [1] (one of whom, Franklin, was at the same day investigating the laws of electricity), and four members of the faculty of Medicine, to visit, witness, and report upon his exhibitions. The experiments of Mesmer in their presence seem not to have been as successful as ordinary; for there is a natural disturbing influence which every new discoverer and inventor experiences, when first meeting so trying an ordeal. Dr. Franklin thought lightly of Mesmer's experiments before he viewed them; and of their practical value his opinion remained unchanged afterwards.[2] Yet the commission, in their elaborate report, allow that in what they witnessed there was something that seemed the working of a mysterious agent. They reduced Mesmer's exhibitions to four classes: — First, those which could be explained on physiological grounds; second, those which were contrary to the laws of magnetism; third, those where the imagination of the mesmerized person was the source of the phenomena; and fourth, facts which led them to admit a special agent ("*un agent*

[1] The five members were Le Roy, Bailly, De Bery, Lavoisier, and our countryman, Benjamin Franklin.

[2] See Works of Franklin, Sparks' edition, vol. x., pp. 75, 76.

particulier").[1] One of the Medical Commission became a convert to Mesmer's views. The intelligent observers of that day testified to cases of a magnetic control and of clairvoyance, similar to those witnessed in our times.[2] About the year 1825, the medical faculty at Paris began to institute new inquiries, continuing their investigations till 1831. As an indication of the present interest of men of science, Reichenbach, in Germany, and Gregory, professor of chemistry in Edinburgh, have written extended and labored volumes.

Since, then, it is universally admitted, and has been from Franklin's day, that a special mysterious agent, like to electricity, yet different from it, is seen acting in the familiarly known experiments in "animal magnetism," why should it seem visionary in this day, when so much is known of the action both of animal electricity and of the nervous principle, to refer these phenomena to the sufficient though unexplained natural cause already considered?[3] Miss Harriet Martineau (whose reading on this subject certainly will not be called in question) cites Cuvier as saying of animal magnetism: "However the effects produced upon persons yet without cognizance before the operation commences, those which

[1] See the French "Encyclopedie Methodique;" dept. "Physique," art. "Magnetisme."

[2] See London Family Library, vol. LXIII., p. 362, et seq.

[3] This is virtually the view of scientific writers on this subject. See "Letters to a Candid Inquirer, on Animal Magnetism, by Wm. Gregory, M.D., F.R.S.E., Prof. of Chemistry in the University of Edinburgh, 1851." Also the same author's translation of Reichenbach.

take place after the same operation has caused them to lose cognizance, and those which animals display, leave little doubt that the proximity of two animate bodies in certain positions, and with a certain movement, has a real effect independent of all participation of the imagination of one of the two. It appears equally clearly, also, that the effects are due to some communication which is established between their nervous systems." [1]

With such authority as this to sanction it, it is not presumptuous to hint the following illustration of a possible law. Since one class of persons (healthy males) are known to be positively electric, and another class (delicate females) are known to be negatively electric; and since in their nervous energies there may be the same difference, when by the naturally exciting manipulations each is charged like a Leyden jar, why should there not be between the two a mutual attraction, in which the stronger will control the movements of the weaker?

Moreover, since my nervous fluid, like an electric

[1] Miss Martineau's Letters on Mesmerism, No. v., p. 19. ("Cependant les effets obtenus sur des personnes déjà sans connaissance avant que l'operation commençat, ceux que ont lieu sur les autres personnes après que l'operation même leur a fait perdre connaissance, et ceux que présentent les animaux, ne permettent guères de douter que la proximité de deux corps animés dans certaines positions et avec certain mouvements n'ait un effet réal, indépendant de toute participation de l'imagination d'une des deux. Il parait assez clairement aussi que les effets sont dûs à une communication quelconque qui s'etablit entre leurs systémes nerveux." (Anatomie Comparée, Tome II., p. 117. Du system nerveux consideré en action.")

current, courses along the nerves leading from the brain, enters and controls the muscles of my mouth, and causes my lips to utter my thought, why may it not be, when I am put in communication with a mesmerized person, whose personal control over her nervous energy has been overpowered by another, and that nervous energy is left to be subject to the control of any one put in nervous connection with her, — why may it not occur that my nervous energy shall pass over, as electricity on connected telegraphic wires, to her frame, so as to control her lips; and thus, when I am expecting the reply from her mouth, and unconsciously directing my nervous energy to her lips, through them I may speak out my own thought by an operation as purely mechanical as when I send my thought over the telegraph wires to be spoken out from a distant machine? I think, Charles, that no instance of clairvoyance can be found in which the thought uttered by the clairvoyant may not be traced directly over to the mind of the person put in communication with her. Thoughts of which I am conscious, facts that I once knew but did not recall at the moment (though in the mind, and capable of being recalled under mental excitement), imaginations I have conceived, and perhaps mental impressions of mine of which I am unconscious, — all these do thus speak out of the lips of the clairvoyant; but nothing else, I think we have good authority for saying. In the long list of cases cited by Prof. Gregory of Edinburgh, (perhaps the ablest man of science who has written in the English language on this subject) there is scarcely one

that cannot readily be explained on this principle.[1] In the instance of the Bolton clairvoyant,[2] who described in England what a certain person in California was engaged in on a certain day, the distance and the lapse of time before the verification is too great to give any assurance. The reading of the clairvoyant with bandaged eyes may seem an exception; but it is not, if any person in the company is overlooking what is read, or is even familiar with it. Let a well-attested case be presented, one which could any day be furnished, if such an one could be given, and it should be received. Yet so generally admitted is the fact that in clairvoyance nothing but the thought of persons in communication with the clairvoyant is reported, that Miss Martineau herself has remarked, "It is almost an established opinion, among some of the wisest students of Mesmerism, that the mind of the somnambule mirrors that of the Mesmerist."[3]

[1] See Gregory's Letters, Nos. VI., VII., VIII., especially.

[2] See Gregory, Letter XVI., p. 408.

[3] See Miss Martineau's Letters, No. III., p. 11.

Letter Fourth.

POSSIBLE LAWS OF THE SPIRITUAL MEDIUM ILLUSTRATED IN THE "SPIRITUAL RAPPINGS."

"Haec autem ego non tentavi; sed nec etiam neganda sunt mihi; quia si non viderimus magnetem sibi ferrum trahentem, non certificamur, nec crederemus. Similiter quod * * piscis quidam marinus se capientis sensum aufert." — *Galen on the Employ of Incantation in Healing.*

[These things, indeed, I have not tested; but neither, indeed, are they denied by me; because, if we have not seen the magnet attracting iron, we are not certain of it, neither should we believe it. In like manner that a certain fish should take away the feeling of him seizing it.]

Possible Truth guides Practice. — As in a Thunder-storm. — Tables moved. — The Nervous Energy a Sufficient Power. — "Rappings" not new. — Media, Persons of Nervous Organism. — Communications accord with Temperament. — Arm Convulsed, as the Orator's. — Seraphic Eloquence, as the Excited Writer. — Communications of Things Forgotten. — All seen in Excited Speaker.

My Dear Charles:

Shall we hazard an application of these principles to the phenomena called the "spiritual rappings"? Bear in mind, Charles, the suggestion is not hinted at all as a scientific explanation; to such presumption it would be folly to pretend. But, in the known and acknowledged mysterious phenomena produced in us by the nervous influence, may we not see enough to assure us it is *that influence*, not the communications of spirits

disembodied, which we see working. Less than a century ago, Franklin was first making his noble experiments in electricity, which proved satisfactorily to all thinking men that the bolts of heaven were no supernatural uncontrollable power, but a natural agent, which could be guided with an iron rod away from our exposed heads. Certainly it would have been presumption in a mere novice in that study to have attempted to theorize on any phenomena witnessed. Yet, bear witness, it would not have been presumption, it would have been sound discretion and commendable boldness, if even a common observer had stepped forward in the circle of his friends, awed by the terrible peals of a thunderstorm, and had said, "Friends, be we trustful and fearless; we may not *explain* the terrific agent rending the heavens and earth around us, but we may be sure it is a *natural agent*, which we should not dread." So, too, may not the spiritual phenomena, so mysterious and even awing, seen around us now, be surely referred to the action of our own nervous organism, though no scientific explanation be attempted?

Tables are *moved* by a mysterious power, when a circle of interested spectators, with a medium, are seated around it. But remark this, Charles. Stretch forth your arm, and grasp a heavy weight and raise it. How mighty that power put forth! Trace it back to its origin, and how wonderful! You *willed* to perform that act. Instantly in your brain, as in a Leyden jar, a nervous influence was generated, which, coursing along your nerves as on metallic wires, entered your muscles

and there the mere shrinking of the fibres of a little muscle, the shortening of a small cord, drew up the large weight in your hand. How immeasurable, how unaccountable, such a power! And now think of that circle around the table. When they first sit calmly down, no movement is seen; none can be produced. But when for a few moments in intense mental action, a nervous energy has been generated in the frame of each, until, like a circle of Leyden jars, a whole battery is surcharged, and there are negatives as well as positives in the circle, who can wonder if currents of nervous influence should leap over from one to the other, and if tables, chairs, or anything else intervening, should be moved? We should not wonder at any phenomena which might show themselves under such circumstances. We should only fear that, like inexperienced experimenters in electricity, we should thoughtlessly inflict upon ourselves an incurable injury. Our kind Creator has given me this mighty and wondrous nervous agency to be carefully used as the steady mover of my body's machinery. If I overcharge myself with it, if I strain the vital organs which generate it, I may weaken my own energies for life.

Mysterious *rappings* give response to our thoughts, uttered or merely conceived, as we sit around the table. This, however, is not a *new* exhibition of what we must regard an over-excitement of our own nervous energy. These raps are in nature not unlike those electric crackings heard amid the whizzing bands of factory wheels, and the electric snapping heard in cold weather from the

skin of animals when stroked, and from our person in drawing off a woollen under-garment. Physiologists and ordinary historians have recorded numberless instances of these electric-like shocks and reports experienced by persons of an excitable nervous temperament.[1]

Moreover, Charles, reflect a moment on the character of the *media*, and on the nature of the communications given, and see if you can believe that spirits in another world are the communicators; see if all does not confirm the fact that these responsive rappings are the working of our own nervous organism, echoing to our own thoughts. We should not disparage at all, we wish not to do so, the character of those who are generally the media. We allude not to the fact that they are generally young, and inexperienced, and females. But observe simply this fact: they are just that class whom we ordinarily speak of as persons of a high nervous temperament, of an acute mental organism. It is the very class of persons in whom the nervous principle is active, from whom we seem to see the nervous energy thus flowing off. The *communications* received, also, seem to correspond to the character of the inquirer; indeed, to be the echo of his or her thought. Is the company lively, cheerful, if not humorous? Little Willie, familiarly called, responds, and he asks for his favorite song or waltz; and "the Colonel," laughingly asked for, echoes his presence by drumming a loud march on the shaking table. Is the com-

[1] See Müller, as quoted Let. Third, p. 28; Let. Fifth, pp. 49—51.

pany grave, spiritually if not religiously inclined? The responses are in keeping; and the inquirer's own favorite, be he Swedenborg, Channing or Wesley, is endorsed and canonized. Now, not at all because these differing religious views are responded to, can we object to these communications. But, where the sentiment expressed is ever, in its moral tone, in keeping with that of the inquirer, seems it not to indicate that the response is the echoing of our own mental organism, the *telegraphic* rapping out of our own *electric-borne* thought?

The arm, again, is *convulsed* and unmanned; and, with spasmodic, rapid and uncontrollable force, it writes disjointed or connected sentences. The mere spasmodic action of the muscles here seen is not new, or at all peculiar. Who has not felt it when under intense excitement, either of fear or anxiety, or in deep thought? when, instinctively we rise and walk the room, that the overcharged nervous influence may have work to expend itself upon, a channel over which to pass off. The true orator is always more or less under its power; the movement of his quivering fingers and arm, and of his whole agitated frame, and even the grand and almost seraphic roll of his periods and movement of his thought, showing that he is, beyond himself, moved by a power self-excited, indeed, but now, in a measure, beyond his control. Schiller and Shelley, and such minds as theirs, always have written under such an influence. Witness what, as we have already noted, the physiologist Müller says of himself. Yet, after all, who knows not that only his own train of thought, though at the time he

be unconscious of it, and now, when the excitement has passed off and he sees it in manuscript, he can hardly believe it *his*, yet only *his own* thought has come from his pen or his tongue. The most unlettered man or woman, excited by stimulated appetite or passion, by intoxicating drink, or by fear, anger or love, talks like Gabriel; and religion is the chief theme.

Charles, if you are a writing medium, try it, and see if it be not so in these new phenomena. Bring a man to your table, a part of whose name you know; and when that part is written, ask the spirit whom you may imagine guides your pen to write the other part. Most assuredly you will find that only your *own knowledge* will be responded to. Prepared, then, to watch more closely your own mind's working, go on and observe the other responses you receive. You may not at first be able to trace all you write to your own positive knowledge, your once known and forgotten, but in that moment of intense mental action remembered thought and realized imaginings. But, if you do not, be assured you have, in the orator and the writer, carried by their own mental action, — you have in them those who can sympathize. No man, under such circumstances, utters or writes anything but his own thought; but, how that expressed or written thought came into his mind, and became his, no great speaker or writer can explain. It is to him as real a wonder as can be the pencillings of the spiritual medium.

Once, again, the reporting medium mentions facts and thoughts, or imaginings, which are not in her own

mind, but in that of the inquirer. She receives by the rappings, or she writes with the pen, or she utters with the voice, not her knowledge, or surmise, or impression, but that which belongs to the mind of him put in communication with her. He asks the name of a friend of his own, the date of his birth, &c.; and facts known only to himself, and perhaps not recalled even by his own mind at the moment, are accurately given. He asks about the present state of a sick friend's health, or the locality of a lost or stolen piece of property; and his surmise — sometimes, of course, right, but oftener wrong — is expressed by the medium. If any other communication than these, Charles, has ever come from a clairvoyant or a spiritual medium, candidly should we acknowledge it; and, as lovers of truth, we should not only cheerfully, but with pleasure, receive the testimony of it.

Cases, indeed, are reported, in which inquirers have been informed, by the medium, of circumstances in the lives of relatives of theirs, and of other facts, of which they suppose themselves never before to have had knowledge. But three things are here to be borne in mind. Even if our supposition as to the source of these responses be *correct*, it is not to be expected that all the facts can at once be classified. Every right theory in science, after being first started, though sound in the main, must go stumbling on for years, now modified here, and now revised there, as new facts, slightly different, come to be ranged under it.

Yet again; who can say certainly that any fact which

is thus reported from the medium never was known to him? We remember the famous case of the servant-girl in England, who, during a sickness which affected the brain, repeated accurately passages of the Bible in Hebrew; and when the secret of this apparent miracle was traced out, it was found that in early life she had lived in the family of a clergyman, whom she had often heard repeating Hebrew; and, although never a word had been comprehended, or even remembered, so as to be uttered by her, it was all lodged in her mind, and it was her own knowledge, which, under nervous excitement, came echoing from her lips, all unconsciously to herself. Who knows what facts, casually mentioned in his hearing in childhood, entirely uncomprehended and not noted in memory, are yet fast adhering in his mental organism; and who can say, positively, that the mysterious communications of the spiritual "medium" are not those deep-hidden impressions brought out under a strong nervous excitement? Such responses cannot be test cases; for in them there is, at least, uncertainty.

But, what is more to the point, if anything else than what is already in the mind of the inquirer can come from the medium's tongue or pen, why may not a test case be given? Easily, indeed, could such an undisputed case be tried; a case where no doubt could enter. For instance, let a clairvoyant be called on to describe any scene passing at the present moment in a distant place, knowledge of which could not be in the mind of either party; and let some person at the same time, in that distant place, keep an accurate record, to be compared afterwards with the

report of the medium. But never has it been my fortune to hear of such an instance. The communications of the clairvoyant and of the spiritual medium, as to facts that can be tested, have been only the knowledge, remembered or forgotten, and the surmise, right or wrong, of the person consulting.

That, by a united current of two persons' nervous influence, the thought of one should pass over, and be rapped, written or spoken, out by another, is mysterious; but it is no more mysterious than that, by a connection of electric conductors, and by an excitement of the electric principle, I can control the electric influence of a series of electric conductors, reaching from New Orleans to Boston, and have my thought rapped or written out a thousand miles from the point where I exert the energy. It is not supernatural; and more, it is neither unnatural nor unaccountable. Moreover, that the unremembered thought of the inquirer should be thus expressed, has its counterpart in the experience of every excited speaker and writer. Finally, that these communications should be almost entirely of a religious character is natural; for we know that in all mental excitements the religious sensibilities are most exercised.

Letter Fifth.

POSSIBLE LAWS OF THE SPIRITUAL MEDIUM; ILLUSTRATED IN "WITCHCRAFT."

"He denied absolutely that there was, or could be, such a thing as witchcraft, in the current sense." — *Burroughs, quoted by Bancroft.*

"Witchcraft seems to be the skill of applying the plastic spirit of the world unto some unlawful purposes." — *Cotton Mather.*

"The Salem justices are so well instructed in the *Cartesian Philosophy*, that they undertake to give a demonstration how this touch does cure the afflicted persons." * * * "These afflicted persons do say, and often have declared, that they can see spectres when their eyes are shut, as well as when they are opened. This one thing I evermore accounted as very observable, and that which might serve as a good key to unlock the nature of these mysterious troubles, if duly improved by us." — *Brattle.*

The Inquiry may be practical soon. — Puritans Men of Strong Sense. — Their Precedents. — History of Witchcraft. — Sir Matthew Hale. — Three Opinions. — The Facts. — Convulsions. — Other Bodily Affections. — Metals attracted. — Objects moved. — Rappings. — Wonderful Eloquence. — Mysterious Knowledge, or Clairvoyance. — Developments the same as in our Day. — Excitements and Impressions of the Age. — Causes, as in Royal Academy's Report. — Mather and Brattle agreeing in Principle. — The Nervous Principle harmonizes all.

My Dear Charles:

Our inquiries thus far may seem to have related to matters of mere curiosity; a decision in reference to which, either way, will be of no practical value. May it prove so. There are scenes of by-gone days, however, that speak their warning. When noble young Brattle,

distinguished by university honors in Old England, a youth of ingenuous spirit, and sympathizing heart, and of strong native sense, sat writing in the very midst of the terrible Salem excitement and executions, and penned the sentence read above, happy would he have been if "the key" had already been found to "unlock the nature of these mysterious troubles."

They were men of strong sense who lived in those times. As Palfrey has remarked, "To hold an opinion entertained by Sir Edward Coke and Sir Matthew Hale, while enjoying no better opportunities for correcting it, is not to incur the reproach of any extraordinary dulness of intellect."[1] Mather, in illustration, records that "the Justices and Judges" "consulted the Precedents of former times, and Precepts laid down by learned writers about witchcraft; as Keeble on the Common Law, chap. Conjuration (an Author approved by the Twelve Judges of our Nation); also, Sir Matthew Hale's Trials of Witches, printed An. 1682; Glanvil's Collection of Sundry Trials in England and Ireland, in the years 1658, 61, 64 & 81; Bernard's Guide to Jurymen; Baxter's & R. B., their Histories about Witches, and their Discoveries; C. Mather's Memorable Providences relating to Witchcrafts, printed 1685."[2] Surely the opinions of such men must have been based on something worthy of investigation; while the terrible results

[1] Mass. Hist. Collections, vol. XXIX.; Semi-centennial Discourse, by John G. Palfrey, delivered Oct. 31, 1844.

[2] Mather's Magnalia, Book VI., Sadduc. debel., § 5; London Edit., 1702, p. 80.

flowing from the application of their opinions makes such an investigation a demand of humanity.

A fearful and long history has "Witchcraft" had. Noticed in yet earlier times, the first mention of penal statutes in reference to it is that of Pope Innocent VIII., in 1484. Terrible was the havoc afterwards made. At Geneva, during three months of the year 1515, over five hundred persons were burned, charged with being witches. In the diocese of Como, in Italy, one thousand persons were, during one year, put to death on this charge. In England, especially under the reigns of Elizabeth and James, long and painful is the story of its victims. The able and excellent Sir Matthew Hale himself, after a protracted and candid examination, carried away by the spirit of the age, gave the authority of the highest tribunal, and of the most exalted powers on the seat of that tribunal, to these condemnations.[1] Surely there must have been facts unmistakable and indisputable which swayed such a mind, and so large a class of minds.

The three classes of opinions already alluded to as universally prevalent among men of all ages and nations, in reference to mysteries of the Spiritual Medium,[2] are seen illustrated in New England during the reign of the "Witchcraft" excitement. Rev. George Burroughs, a burly, muscular, portly Englishman, a man all *physical*, when arrested and tried for witchcraft, boldly and abso-

[1] "American Criminal Trials," by Peleg W. Chandler. Boston, 1841, vol. I., pp. 67—69.

[2] See Letter Second, p. 23.

lutely denied that there could be any such thing.[1] The slender and delicate Mather, a close student and full of learning, nervous and thoughtful, reflective and impulsive, the man all *spiritual*, deemed the mysterious manifestations which his senses perceived (though his imagination gave them coloring) to be supernatural. Calef,[2] the merchant, a man of strong practical sense, and Brattle,[3] a cultured scholar and finished lawyer, a man of even balance, acknowledged the facts, referring some to known causes, and leaving others for future investigation to explain or classify.

Observe we, then, the *attested facts*, as given by eye-witnesses. In collecting these, let us do the justice, even to such a man as Mather, as to allow his truth and sincerity in his own parenthetical declaration: — "Reader, I write what hath fallen within my own personal observation."[4] Visionary as he might be in theorizing upon his observations, as a chronicler of observed facts probably no one will call in question his authority, especially where his statements are in keeping with those of other observers. Perhaps, after a collation and comparison of them, we may be surprised at the uniform history of the mysterious manifestations of the spiritual medium.

[1] Bancroft's Hist. of U. States, vol. III., p. 92.

[2] "More Wonders of the Invisible World," by Robert Calef, merchant of Boston, in New England. Printed at London, 1700, and at Salem, 1796.

[3] Letter of Thomas Brattle, F.R.S., written at Boston, Oct. 8, 1692. Mass. Hist. Collect., vol. v.

[4] Mather's Magnalia, Book VI., p. 77.

Violent *convulsions* of the bodies of those afflicted were the first and chief witnessed facts. Every muscle would be seen twitching; sharp pangs would dart through the limbs, as if the very bones were agonized; and the person affected would roll upon the ground, start up and leap with unnatural vehemence, and would jump and oscillate and bound upward and forward, as if furiously riding.[1] The evidence derived from these convulsions was especially relied upon in trials for witchcraft. The afflicted being perfectly free from convulsions, as soon as the person accused with bewitching them was brought into the court-room severe spasms would come on. The professed witch was often identified in this manner. The afflicted person was blindfolded, and several persons were caused to touch her in succession. At the touch of the accused, the convulsions would instantly cease. Sometimes this failed, the convulsions subsiding at the touch of another than the accused; a case which gave Sir Matthew Hale a check in his confidence, although it did not alter his eventual decision.[2]

Other *bodily affections* were witnessed. Surprising, apparently superhuman muscular strength was exhibited by persons affected. A strong man could lift a bedstead, bed and man lying on it.[3] On this ground, the gigantic Burroughs, though cool and unaffected, was

[1] See Brattle's Letter, and Mather often: especially Magnalia, B. VI., p. 74.

[2] American Criminal Trials, vol. I., p. 70.

[3] Mather's Magnalia, B. VI., p. 72.

condemned, though his natural power of muscle sufficiently spoke in its own defence.[1] Pricking sensations were often experienced in the flesh, the marks of which, as of pinches with the nails, were seen.[2] Sometimes a rigidity came over the frame, every joint becoming so stiff that it was impossible to bend it.[3]

An attraction of other substances to the flesh of the affected, especially of metallic articles, such as pins, iron rods, &c., was noted by many witnesses; and these attractions were accompanied with pricking sensations, as if the pins pierced the flesh;[4] although, on examination it was found no wound had been inflicted. Violent motions in objects around, as if attracted and impelled by some mysterious force, were witnessed. A staff, an iron hook, shoes, keys, and even a chest, were seen to move, as if tossed by an invisible hand. A bed on which a sufferer lay shook most violently, even when several persons were seated on it.[5] Stones were hurled against houses and persons; articles of iron, pewter and brass, were tossed about, a candlestick being thrown down, a spit flying up chimney, and a pressing-iron, a stirrup,

[1] Bancroft, vol. III., p. 91.

[2] Mather and Calef often; also, Narrative of Rev. Mr. Turrell, of Medford, Mass., in Mass. Hist. Collect., vol. XX., p. 9.

[3] Mather's Mag., p. 72.

[4] Mather's Mag., B. VI., pp. 68, 70, 72 & 79. Cases of this kind are common. One occurred about three years since at Washington, D. C., and was reported upon by Prof. Page, of the Patent Office, in the National Intelligencer.

[5] Mather's Magnalia, B. VI., pp. 68, 69, 70.

and even a small anchor, being moved; of which facts many persons were eye-witnesses.[1]

Mysterious *rappings* were also heard. Audible scratchings on the bedstead of a person affected were made. A drumming on the boards was heard; when a voice seemed to say, "We knock no more! we knock no more!" A frying-pan rang so loud that the people at a hundred yards distance heard it. Sounds as of steps on the chamber-floor were heard. Divers noises as of the clattering of chairs and stools were heard in an adjoining room.[2] Very varied are these instances.

Wonderful *powers of thought* and grace of expression were exhibited by the most ignorant and uneducated, and by persons of ordinary, and even of small mental capacity. Of one person it is recorded, "He had a speech incessant and voluble, and (as was judged) in various languages." Of a little girl it is mentioned, "She argued concerning death, with paraphrases on the thirty-first Psalm, in strains that quite amazed us."[3]

Cases of *mysterious knowledge*, like those now called clairvoyance, are reported, even by the coolest witnesses. Brattle mentions that "several persons were accused by the afflicted whom the afflicted never had known."[4] Little girls thus affected (as we learn in the early Salem troubles, of which Brattle is here speaking) described

[1] "The Stone-throwing Devil," by Richard Chamberline. (See copy Cambr. Coll. Library.) London, 1698.

[2] Mather's Magnalia, B. VI., pp. 69, 70.

[3] Do., B. VI., pp. 70, 73.

[4] Mass. Hist. Collect., vol. V., p. 73.

persons they had never seen as their tormentors, and by these descriptions their parents or friends sought out the accused even in remote places.[1] In mentioning this fact, Brattle says that some persons thought that God, and others that good angels, communicated with the affected.[2] Brattle states no personal opinion, although he accredits the fact.[2] Brattle also records, "These afflicted persons do say, and often have declared, that they can see spectres when their eyes are shut as well as when they are open. This one thing I evermore accounted as very observable, and that which might serve as a good key to unlock the nature of these mysterious troubles, if duly improved by us."[3] Mather also states a fact, and it would seem impossible that he could have been deceived, on which he relied much, and which has oft been referred to as most mysterious. Of one of the little daughters of John Goodwin, of Boston, he says, "Perceiving that her troublers understood Latin, some trials were thereupon made whether they understood Greek and Hebrew, which, it seems, they also did; but the Indian languages they did not seem so well to understand."[4] Of Ann Cole, Mather says, "Her tongue was improved by the Dæmon, to express things unknown to herself;" and of Elizabeth Knap he writes, "Though she was in one of her fits, and had her eyes wholly shut, yet when

[1] Mather's Magnalia, often.

[2] Mass. Hist. Collect., vol. v., p. 73.

[3] Ibid, pp. 73, 74.

[4] Mather's Magnalia, B. vi., p. 75; Bancroft's U. States Hist., vol. iii., p. 76.

this innocent woman (the accused) was coming, she discovered herself wonderfully sensible of it, and was in grievous agonies at her approaches." [1]

No one can compare the series of facts thus recorded without being struck with their almost entire similarity to those of the developments witnessed in our day. Even in the lesser details this entire analogy may be seen; as in the rigidity or stiffness of the affected person's frame,[2] the reported case of one person drawn with force up to the ceiling,[3] the bringing of the sick to consult these clairvoyant advisers;[4] and the fact that the person in a swoon remembered nothing of the communications given when in it, her own mind not being the actor.[5]

Having glanced thus at the *facts* of witchcraft, notice we the *sources* to which different classes of minds referred them; and draw we then our own natural inferences.

There was something peculiar in the *age* and *circumstances* of the early New England colonists, to create a more than usual general nervous excitement. They lived in a wilderness; and the terrors of their dreary

[1] Ibid, B. VI., p. 67. This same fact, that by a nervous shock an excited person actually perceives the approach of another, Shakspeare alludes to, Macbeth, Act IV., Scene I.; the witch saying,

"By the pricking of my thumbs,
Something wicked this way comes."

[2] Mather's Magnalia, p. 72.

[3] Calef, Letter I., § 8.

[4] Brattle's Letter, Mass. Hist. Collect., vol. V., p. 71.

[5] Hale, quoted by Bancroft, Hist. of U. S., vol. III., p. 91.

abode were heightened, to those delicately brought up in Old England, by the popular religious belief, that "*evil spirits*" had been sent, even by Christ himself, to take up their abode in "desert places."[1] They dwelt among savage and heathen tribes, whose *powahs*, like their East India fellows,[2] recovered persons afflicted with certain diseases by their incantations; and, as Mather confidently asserts of one, he "could precisely inform such who desire his assistance from whence goods taken from them were stolen, and whither carried." Seeing instances of this kind, which, as Mather says, those "who have conversed much among them have had no reason to question," and referring them to "diabolical agency,"[3] there was, as in the days of Joan of Arc, a natural reason not only for a strong belief in the supernatural, but there was also a natural cause exciting such an undue manifestation of the nervous energy as would produce the facts leading to that belief. Yet, again, living in a forest region, where storms, with a before unknown degree of electrical terror, burst in thunder and lightning over them, it is worthy of notice, that the same class of minds which referred the mysteries of the nervous principle seen in witchcraft to supernatural causes, — that same class regarded this *associate intermediate agency* as supernatural, and under the control of evil spirits; not only Cotton Mather, but other minds in that day, being satisfied that *Dæmons* con-

[1] Mather's Magnalia, B. VI., chap. VII., p. 66.

[2] Ibid, B. VI., chap. V., § 1, p. 52; also, Postscript, p. 59.

[3] Ibid, p. 52.

trolled the lightnings, because so many meeting-houses were struck by the electric fluid.[1]

A candid examination and comparison would seem to indicate the same classification made by Franklin and the members of the French academy of the manifestations in Mesmer's experiments. There are those for which known *physiological* facts may account. All the affections of "the afflicted" were evidently of a nervous kind. The subjects were nearly all children, or young females of the most ignorant and uncultured class;[2] the natural subjects of nervous excitement. The convulsions were ordinary nervous spasms. Moreover, the derangement of the nervous system was plainly seen, and described as an attendant of the afflicted person's fit; Brattle remarking that "even the judges saw that the brain of the confessors was affected;"[3] Mather also, again and again, alluding to the manifest insanity of many of the afflicted; mentioning of Mrs. Whetford, that after being bewitched ten years, she became crazy;[4] relating of the Irish woman, Glover, that five or six physicians were appointed by the court to examine if "she were in no way crazed in her intellectuals;"[5] and recording of Mr. Philip Smith, that he was conscious beforehand that mental derangement was coming on, and requested

[1] Mather's Magnalia, B. VI., chap. III., pp. 14, 20.

[2] Brattle, Mass. Hist. Collect., vol. v., pp. 75, 77; and Mather everywhere.

[3] Ibid, vol. v., p. 65.

[4] Mather's Wonders of the Invisible World, p. 58.

[5] Mather's Magnalia, B. VI., p. 72.

his friends to "have a care" of him.[1] There were, again, a large class of reported facts for which known *psychological* causes are an explanation. To the influence of excited imagination many of the sights, sounds and physical impressions felt, must be referred; the impressions on the organs of sense of the persons affected being as real as if made by an external object. Thus spectres were seen when none appeared to unexcited eyes;[2] stones of great size were seen and felt to strike persons, when no stone was found and no mark of a blow left;[3] and sometimes one portion of a company would smell the odor of brimstone, and when others around denied that they smelt the same, the affected ones would become satisfied that they had been mistaken in their impression.[4]

Yet a third class of witnessed facts, allowed by all classes, must be referred to that *special* unknown agent which the French savans recognized in Animal Magnetism. And it is worth noting, that among the personal observers of all classes there was virtually a surprising unanimity on this point. Even blunt George Burroughs only denied that there could be any such thing as witchcraft "in the *current sense*."[5] Mather, on the other extreme, explained it, as he did the lightning, to be "a skill of applying the *plastic spirit of the*

[1] Mather's Magnalia, B. VI., p. 70.
[2] Brattle and Mather, often.
[3] Mather's Magnalia, B. VI., p. 69.
[4] Calef's Letters, p. 47.
[5] Bancroft's U. S., vol. III., p. 92.

world;"[1] this intermediate agent being simply supposed by him to be, in common with the lightning, allowed by the Creator to come under the control of *dæmons*. Mather remarks, in reference to the opinions of his day, that "many good men" thought there ought not to be any condemnations for witchcraft; and that "they had also some *philosophical schemes* of witchcraft, and of the method and manner wherein magical poisons operate, which further supported them in their opinion."[2] Brattle, too, early in the troubles, says that there were attempts to explain these affections "on the *Cartesian* philosophy;"[3] and it is interesting to observe this, since Descartes is the very one to whom the modern theory of "the animal spirits," the "nervous principle," or the spiritual medium, is referred.[4]

Surely, then, Charles, after such a survey as this, who shall say the suggestion is visionary, that *possible* laws of the nervous principle, analogous to *known* laws of electricity (an associate intermediate agency), *may be* the source of these mysterious phenomena? Glance, then, over the list of facts; and, not at all as a scientific explanation, but as a just illustration, suppose an application of laws of the nervous principle similar to the established laws of electricity. Surprising strength, rigidness of muscle, and pricking sensations like those of a current from the galvanic battery, certainly need

[1] Mather's Wonders of the Invisible World, p. 56.
[2] Mass. Hist. Collect., by Barber, p. 223.
[3] Brattle's Letter, Mass. Hist. Collect., vol. v., pp. 62, 63.
[4] Bostock's Physiology, vol. i., chap. vi., § 2, p. 201.

no comment. Metallic substances may be attracted as by a magnet, and adhere to the flesh, and various articles may be drawn about as by electric currents. Mysterious "rappings," like electric snappings, may be heard as about a surcharged receiver. Wonderful power of thought and utterance, like to that shown by every person under strong nervous excitement, may be displayed. Moreover, if it be so that the mind of the clairvoyant is perfectly inactive, and that the thought of another person present is uttered through her lips, certainly the cases related by Brattle and others, both as to the communications of the Indian powahs, and of "the afflicted," were but the uttering of the thought of others present, by a connected nervous energy. Surely, when the afflicted girl read to Cotton Mather Latin, Greek and Hebrew, and Indian "not so well," it was the precise echo of *his own* learning coming from *her* lips. At least, Charles, there is a coincidence here worthy of further examination and comparison.

Letter Sixth.

"THE MYSTERIOUS DEVELOPMENTS OF THE SPIRITUAL MEDIUM AS SEEN AND COMMENTED UPON IN THE MIDDLE AGES."

"Perturbationes item sive passiones malae, quae phantasiam sequuntur, vehementer nedum proprium, sed alienuum corpus possunt transcendere, ac illud immutare adeo ut mirabilis possint produci impressiones in elementis, item rebus extrinsecis; sicque sanabiles quosdam morbos esse citra medicinae adminiculum. Inest certe hominum animis virtus quaedam deli tescens immutandi, attrahendi, ligandi, potissimum si maximo imaginationis, mentis, voluntatisque excessu, in id quod vel attrahere, vel immutare, vel ligare vel impedire cupit." — *Scholiast of the Middle Ages.*

[Excitements, also, or diseased affections, which follow a fantasy, can strongly overpower not only one's own, but a foreign body, and so change it that wonderful impressions may be produced in the elements, also in objects without us; and thus certain diseases may be curable without the administering of medicine. There is certainly in the souls of men a certain mysterious power of attracting, of changing, of binding (especially where there is the greatest excess of imagination, of mental energy, of will), over that which it desires either to attract, or change, or bind, or impede.]

No new Suggestion. — Link in the Middle Ages to Ancient Times. — Thorough Treatise of that Day. — Magic an Exalted Study. — "Soul of the World." — All Spirits Linked. — A Superior Spirit can control the Body of a Weaker. — As a Magnet the Spirit may attract Material Objects. — Disease Cured. — Power of Numbers. — Power of Song. — The Dæmon, or Spiritual Principle communicating Knowledge. — Aristotle's View. — Excited like Magnetism Electricity. — Sword of Æneas. — The Dæmon nothing but Nervous Excitement. — Virgil's Testimony. — Incense and Drugs excite. — Transformations of Circe and Fascinations in the Middle Ages. — Wonders we are yet to see.

My Dear Charles:

Does it seem to you empirical, unfounded and hasty theorizing, and a suggestion of personal vanity in your

friend, when thus it is hinted that these apparent spiritual influences may be referred to the action of natural causes, to the operation of our own nervous organism? Judge not your friend too hastily; for he has ardently, if not sincerely, been seeking after truth. If he errs in referring these phenomena neither to a good nor an evil supernatural influence, but to *natural* causes, he has a large experience of great and good men, in many an ancient land and clime, erring with him; for even Cicero and Socrates and Moses may be found suggestors of the same hint.

We have already alluded to the fact that the first philosophic examination of the experiments of Mesmer led scientific men to trace back the history of similar developments far into the middle ages. We have just seen that the mysterious developments of witchcraft have a history equally hid in the twilight of the dark ages. Now, Charles, let me lead you back over the fields of history, until we tread the soil of old Greece and Rome, and mingle among the cultured men who trod the earth some eighteen, and some even twenty-two centuries ago. I forewarn you that we shall find the philosophic Cicero, Pliny and Plutarch, the physicians Luke and Galen, and even old Socrates and Plato, witnessing phenomena similar to those we now are wondering at; while, moreover, they ascribed them to similar causes.

We will let a profound scholar, of the middle ages[1]

[1] See an extended and learned *Note* on the first and second chapters of the Thirtieth Book of *Pliny's Natural History*, first

introduce us into that alcove of the library of the ancients where are stored their voluminous and deep-studied treatises on *Spiritual Media;* and his researches will reveal to us scenes in ancient days such as we now behold, and many that we are probably yet to see in succession revived among us.

The scholiast says[1] "that, although often abused by bad men, *magic* is the science of supernatural influences, and has in all ages been regarded the highest of studies. Plato and Pythagoras, and the ablest and best Greeks, believed in it, and studied and practised it, in common with the Assyrians, Egyptians, Persians, and, indeed, all ancient nations. It is, properly speaking, the active portion of natural philosophy. Of its proper employ Plato said that "the magic of Zoroaster seemed to him nothing else than the knowledge and worship of divine beings.

"The *source* whence originate the spiritual communications received through magic, the ancient philosophers found in their idea of 'the soul of the world.' One great universal spirit, so the eastern sages long before Plato believed, pervades immensity; whose influence is the moving principle in all material things, and from whom all human souls and various ranks of superior spirits are emanations. Every human soul is part of the universal spirit; and capable, under favorable circumstances, of partaking of the knowledge of all other spiritual beings. There is in natural existences a kin-

published at Lyons, A. D. 1531; found in the *Paris edition* of 1778.

[1] It is a brief *abstract*, not a translation, which is attempted.

dred principle, either of repulsion or attraction, seated in their hidden powers. This attracting power the Egyptians called *natural magic*, the Greeks *sympathy*. The spiritual principle in man is not united to the body, except by the living principle; nor the intellect with the living principle, except by the spiritual principle.[1] When nature would form a human body, she draws the living principle from the universe. This link reaches celestial existences. Thus demons and departed spirits can be called up. Thus, too, as the ancients say, there is something divine[2] in natural things. So, too, we read in Galen, Hippocrates and the Platonists, that many human souls excel to such an extent, that they can so raise themselves above everything material, as to be restored to themselves and to their vigor when the body has been laid off;[3] as to agitate, to impel, and at will to employ any members of the world, and to control as their own any human body in which the spiritual principle is subjected.[4] Behold here, Charles, in the germ, at least, an illustration of the controlling and moving of material objects, and of the employing

[1] When *contrasted*, *intellectus* and *animus* seem to represent the intellect, the soul, that is, *pure spirit*; *anima*, the spiritual principle, the nervous principle, the spiritual medium; and *spiritus*, the living principle. When *not* in contrast, *spiritus mundi* and *anima mundi* seem to be synonymous. In the former case, the words are rendered as indicated; in the latter, the expression is rendered simply *spirit or soul of the world*.

[2] The history of a philosophy now popular may be traced here.

[3] See the case cited in Letter Ninth, p. 96.

[4] Histoire de Pline. Paris edit., 1778. Tom. X., pp. 139—142.

of the body of another, seen in our day. Let us follow up the theory.

"There are four fluids which the spiritual principle employs at will. As the magnet has a wondrous and peculiar power of attracting iron, so, through the soul of the world, man has a wondrous power. The soul of one existence goes out and enters into another, and excites, impels, or impedes its operations; as the diamond impedes the magnetic stone in attracting iron. The medium of existing things is the spirit of the world. Through this spirit every hidden property of things inanimate, as metals and stones, and of things animate, as plants, is propagated; and this reaches up through man to celestial existences. This is the chain of Homer; these are the circles of Plato. To excite this influence the perturbations or passions of the mind greatly conduce. These perturbations or passions can pass over to a foreign body, and change it so that wonderful impressions can be produced on the elements, even on external objects; and thus diseases can be cured without the aid of medicine. There surely is in the souls of men a certain power of changing, of attracting, of binding (especially where there is the greatest outgoing of imagination, of mind and of will), whatever it *desires* to attract, to change, or to bind. For thus, as the Magi hold, through affections of the soul, as well as through direct aid of certain celestial influences, fortunately in apposition, wonders can be performed. The Arabian philosophers gave rules for training the soul to this power."[1]

[1] Histoire de Pline, Tom. X., pp. 142—150, *Note.*

How plainly, Charles, the learned ancient accounts for the healing of the sick, the power of the magnetizer over another, and the moving of tables, &c., seen in our day, on the principle of nervous excitement.

"The Magi assert, too, that *numbers* enter in a certain manner into the composition of substances; and, having a certain connection in the divine mind, a wonderful property is originated. Thus, the Pythagoreans employed the number three in purifications, to which Virgil several times symbolically refers. The Magians, by this effect of a number, do, indeed, bind, remove, and cure diseases."[1] This form of the mysterious development of the spiritual medium, Charles, is not yet introduced into our circles; but it lives still in the East,[2] and will cross the water, doubtless, in due time.

"By the power of song, too, enchantresses, like Circe, excited and controlled men through this influence. Of this Lucan, Virgil and Tibullus, speak."[3] Another art of the East, which has begun to be employed in connection with the development of our day.

"We come now to another class of magic, that exercised through inspiration from spiritual beings. There are three grades of nature; gods and men being the extremes, and the middle grade being called *demons*, from their superior knowledge. In his book on 'Sleep and

[1] Histoire de Pline, Tom. X., pp. 151—153, *Note*.

[2] See Let. Ninth., p. 105. Shakspeare mentions this magic charm of the number *three*, Macbeth, Act. I., Scene 3.

[3] Histoire de Pline, Tom. X., pp. 157, 158.

Vigils,' Aristotle says, 'The blood descending in great abundance to the sensitive principle, at the same time there descend forms conceived in the imagination; by which means demons can move the fluids, both of the interior and exterior senses, and thus present to the organs certain forms, just as they would outwardly meet us, not only in sleep, but when awake.' Thus demons do really affect us and communicate knowledge." [1] Here, again, is a further attempt, Charles, on the part of the ancients, even to explain the *physiological law* by which the "sensitive principle" is thus affected, so that impressions like real sensations are produced on the bodily senses, and thus real knowledge of distant and of future events communicated to the mind.

And now we come to the concluding part of the scholiast's treatise, and meet a thought yet more in point. The spiritual medium, the spirit of the world, which is the medium of existences, appears to be nothing else than the electrical and nervous fluids, of which physiologists now speak; being excited by the same means, and manifesting the same phenomena when excited. Remember, the soul of the world spoken of by the ancients was nothing more nor less than what we call "the laws of nature;" and which we regard not spirit, but, like electricity, intermediate between matter and spirit; [2] and remembering this, observe how

[1] Histoire de Pline, Tom. X., pp. 168—170.

[2] It is just this neglect to distinguish between pure spirit and the intermediate principles which characterizes Mr. Emerson's expression, "I look for the new teacher * * that shall see the

the excitement here spoken, the source of it, and its passing over from one person to another, is just that we have before hinted. "The demon" (or spiritual principle), says the scholiast, "dreads iron." On this account, those who would drive away the demon (or spiritual principle) hold before them swords, iron, javelins; which also the Mantuan Homer (Virgil) seems to notice in the sixth Æneid: —

> "Procul, O procul este profani
> Conclamat Vates, totoque absistite luco.
> Tuque invade viam, vaginâque eripe *ferrum*."

On this account, Æneas also had a consecrated sword.[1] One can hardly avoid, Charles, comparing this with Mesmer's use of the iron-rod, and the bits of metal now employed by magnetizers.

And now remark a statement even more important, showing that the Platonists meant by demons nothing else than the spiritual or nervous principle. "Saint Thomas (Aquinas) writes, that 'fear, grief and joy, cannot exist in demons, as they are perturbations; since they are these sensitive appetites; and an appetite properly is a property in an organ of the body. Virgil seems to allude to this same view when he says: —

> 'Diine hunc ardorem mentibus addunt,
> Euriale? an sua cuique Deus fit dira cupido.'

A good desire of the soul, then, is called God, by

identity of gravitation with purity of heart." Address at Cambridge, July 15, 1838.

[1] Histoire de Pline, Tom. X., p. 172.

him. Jamblicus writes, that a demon proper is nothing else than the intellect."[1] The further we pursue this subject, Charles, the more shall we feel that there were men of strong common sense, in ancient times, as well as now; and that, if we can but work under the shell and get at the kernel of their thought, we shall find that human minds and human opinions are as truly the same as nuts are, in all lands and in all ages.

"The cultivators of magic," he proceeds, "employed the burning of incense in calling forth the spiritual influence;" a method not yet introduced into our country; though now,[2] and from the most ancient times, employed in the East. "The smoke had two virtues; in it, especially if made from burning the heart, head or wind-pipe, of a chameleon, they thought they had a power of inducing an electrical influence (tonitrua); and in it they made the images of the spirits to appear. The influence of stimulating drugs and of song also was employed, as Virgil, Tibullus and Cato describe; by which an influence so great, over the imagination, and really over the souls of men, was exerted by Circe and other sorceresses, that they not only seemed to themselves to be, but actually were, turned into swine, or anything else the enchantress pleased."[3] Surely, Charles, this belief in enchantment could not have had such a hold on intelligent men, as in many an age, and especially in the middle ages, it gained, unless there does

[1] Histoire de Pline, Tom. X., pp. 172—173.

[2] See Let. Ninth, p. 105.

[3] Histoire de Pline, Tom. X., pp. 173—175.

exist some mysterious power, which, under nervous excitement, one person can exert on another.

The concluding portion of the scholiast's note describes the various methods by which this spiritual communication is gained. The experimenters of our day may wonder at the list, on which they have as yet only entered. "There is Hippomantia, divining by the poisonous excrescence of the colt, of which Virgil speaks. There is the use of the sword of the executioner immersed in wine; there is Axiomantia, the employ of axes; and there is Lecanomantia, which the Assyrians employed, filling a skin with water, and placing in it silver, amber, and certain precious stones;" all of which seem to indicate that the excitement of the spiritual influence by the ancient Magi was through an agency similar to what was afterwards called the discovery of Galvani. Then "there was Aeromantia, and Botanomantia, and Cleromantia, and Gastromantia,[1] and Geomantia, and Pyromantia, and Capnomantia, and Necromantia, and Scyomantia, and Literomantia, and Umbilicomantia, and Chiromantia;"[2] a list most discouraging to him who thinks of investigating this whole subject, most interesting to him who can see the germ of these old systems yet living in the different parts of the

[1] This form of magic deserves special note, as it is one often alluded to among the Romans, Greeks, Hebrews, and the Orientals generally. The scholiast's description of it is, "One class is performed with a large-bellied jar, into which it was the practice for a boy to gaze." The descriptions of the other classes we omit.

[2] Histoire de Pline, Tom. X., pp. 175—177.

world, most exhilarating to itinerant lecturers who anxiously are looking for something to supply the last novelty, and most instructive to him who can assure himself that through them all runs one great principle, and in them all is seen the same intermediate agent working, the "nervous principle," which is the spiritual medium.

The learned scholiast who has given so grand and wide an introduction to the ancient theory of the spiritual medium now takes his leave of us, with this concluding remark, "Thus much concerning the kinds of magic. These are facts which we have culled from certain authors and monuments, and their teachings, themselves most ancient, and by name and title unknown." The remark will prepare us for our next conference.

Letter Seventh.

THE MORBID ACTION OF THE SPIRITUAL MEDIUM, AS OBSERVED AND THEORIZED UPON BY THE PRACTICAL ROMANS.

"Proinde ita persuasum sit, intestabilem, irritam, inanem esse, habentem tamen quasdam veritatis umbras." — *Pliny on Magic.*

[Thus, therefore, he was persuaded that it is dishonest, useless and frivolous, but has nevertheless some shades of truth.]

"No superstition can ever be prevalent, and widely diffused through ages and nations, without having a foundation in human nature." — *Schlegel on the Witches of Shakspeare.*

Ancient Authors" referred to. — Roman View practical. - Modes of seeking Knowledge. — Three Views of Source. — Juvenal's Satire, and Horace's Wit. — Virgil's Allegory, and Interpretation of it. — Plutarch. — His Matter of Fact. — Why Poetic Oracles ceased. — Why Delphi is silent. — The Nervous Exciter failed. — Reason and Religion agreed. — Pliny the Naturalist. — "Magical Vanities." — Hold three-fold, meeting Bodily, Intellectual, and Moral Want. — Some Shades of Truth. — Homer's Spirit called up. — The Naturalist's Conclusion. — Galen, the Physician. — Medical View of Indian, Greek, and Roman Physicians. — Power of Amulets. — Electric Illustrations. — The Physician's Conclusion.

My Dear Charles:

The scholiast of the middle ages, over whose pages we have just been poring, mentioned in his conclusion that he had gleaned his facts and reasonings from the "teachings" of "ancient authors." Among the old Romans, and older Greeks, types of two classes of minds,

we naturally look for his authorities. We may find them agreeing in their facts, and, perhaps, only apparently differing in their conclusions drawn from those facts.

Although among every nation of men all classes of mind are met, yet in his natural bent the pure Roman was a *practical* man. The Romans, at no period, had a national oracle;[1] although caves whence issued mephitic gases, like those which excited the raving Pythoness at Delphi, abounded in volcanic Italy. Moreover, although a few minds of a certain cast were drawn to visit the old Grecian shrines, yet, in the advance of Roman intelligence, the Pythoness there ceased, first to chant in poesy, and then to give even in prose her responses.[2] In the Roman writers, therefore, a practical view of the manifestation of the spiritual medium may be expected. While in various modes, through the spiritual medium, men sought knowledge otherwise unattainable, the common mind regarded the witnessed mysteries as supernatural; the artful practiser on popular belief, half-deceived and half-deceiving, knew part to be deceptive, and part real and mysterious; and the philosophic mind of the poet, the orator, the physician, and the scholar, is seen ever condemning the artifice, yet respecting the facts, and seeking a law for them.

The two prominent modes of seeking such knowledge were through dreams, and through persons under nerv-

[1] Eschenberg's Manual of Classical Literature, Part IV., § 226.
[2] Juvenal and Plutarch; see pp. 74, 76.

ous excitement, or inspiration. By the philosophic, however, trust in such communications was regarded a thing of the past, a reliance of their revered Trojan and Latian ancestors ;[1] and for all the knowledge thus really communicated they found a philosophic explanation.[2] They especially marked that the supposed inspired persons were females of nervous temperament; as the Pythoness of Delphi, the Sibyl who brought the famed books to Tarquin, and the Cumæan Sibyls. The various other methods by which superhuman knowledge was sought among the Romans have been thus classified.[3] *First, Sacrifices.* In solemn pomp the bullock was brought to the altar and slain, and his entrails and liver were laid bare, when the solemn aruspice inspected their appearance, and from it divined the future. *Second, Birds and other animals.* The auspice watched how the raven, crow, owl and cock, sounded their shrill notes, how the eagle and vulture flew, how the sacred chickens picked up their food, and how various quadrupeds crossed his path; and thence augured. *Third, Electrical phenomena.* Early in the morn, or when a storm-cloud gathered, the augurs gazed and listened; and, if lightning flashed or thunder rolled on the *left*, good was promised. *Fourth, The heavenly bodies.* At dead of night, or at early twilight, the inquirer went to the astrologer's tower, usually a Chal-

[1] See Virgil, p. 75.

[2] See Cicero, Let. Eighth, p. 87.

[3] See the invaluable "Roman Antiquities" of Alex. Adam, L.L.D., New York, 1830, pp. 252, 274; with his scholar-like references. Also, "Eschenberg," part IV., § 75.

dean from old Babylon. Taking his book of recorded conjunctions, of risings and settings of the stars and planets, by the aspect of the heavens the Magian divined good or ill. Especially from calculating what star was rising at the moment of one's birth, he foretold the fortunate or adverse destiny of the consulter. *Fifth, Lots.* Thrown like dice, and their fall observed, or, placed in a vase, sometimes filled with water, and drawn out thence by a boy, or by the consulter at the oracle, the priest interpreted the meaning of their peculiar appearance. *Sixth, Magic art.* Among these, what the Greeks called *gastromantia*, and the Latins *ventriloquism*, or speaking from the abdomen, is prominent. The student of Roman literature gathers this picture of it. A boy sits watching the appearance of water in the belly (or bulging portion, γαστρη) of a tall glass vase, while the artful ventriloquist, near by, utters guttural and mysterious responses. *Seventh, Omens.* At important crises, the slightest accident or incident was interpreted favorably, or otherwise; as sneezing, stumbling, spilling salt at table, &c. In reference to all these, it is worthy here to note the three classes of views in every age entertained. The impulsive and ignorant, as well as the cultivated man of nervous temperament, saw in them *supernatural* manifestations; a rough, fear-naught soldier, like Plautus, could in scorn throw the sacred chickens overboard, if they did not eat to suit him; while a man of even balance, of thorough wisdom and address, like Cæsar, when he stumbled and fell on his face in stepping on the shore

of Africa, could turn the bad omen into a good one, by grasping the sand, and kissing it, as he fell, saying, "*Teneo te, Africa,*" — I seize thee, Africa.[1]

Among the able writers of Rome this same difference of view is seen. *Juvenal*, who flourished A. D. 190, satirizes all trust in such communications. He pictures the man of weak mind and conscience trembling for his imagined faults, going to seek pardon, imagining that he sees the silver serpent of the diviner move his head, and that the gods speak to his spirit at night. Distrustful of his own supposed revelations, he seeks the crafty fortune-teller of Judea, the pretended interpreter of the laws of Solyma, and for a paltry copper the Jew sells any dreams he wishes. He hies, then, to the Armenian augur; and, as a last resort, seeks the Chaldean astrologer, the oracle of Delphi having now ceased to respond. The shrewd poet thus presents the two sources of mysterious communications, through one's own agitated dreams, and through the excited and mysterious working of another's fancy; and he seems to hint that, through the nervous principle (anima), the mysterious knowledge comes to the mind (mens), both when in dreams the excited sleeper seizes sometimes the truth, and when the practised fortune-teller by his understood art gains a knowledge of his consulter's secret thought.[2] In the same strain oft writes the pleasure-loving *Horace;* rallying his friend, Leuconoe, for trying Babylonian numbers, and being too credulous; and declaring that

[1] Adam's Roman Antiquities, pp. 254, 256; with his copious references.

[2] Juvenal, Satire VI., 410—450.

intelligent and brave men must be diseased in mind, and fanatical, when they give way to superstitious belief in spiritual manifestations.[1] On the other hand, the sickly, melancholy *Virgil*, the very type of the *reflective* man, gives the opposite picture; dating the view he expresses, however, in a distant age, and throwing in many a reference to philosophic solutions of his own time. The Trojan Æneas goes in confident devotion to the cave of the Cumæan Sibyl. Wondrous is the knowledge of his family she displays; as wondrous as that coming from a similar medium in our day; but she speaks in a nervous frenzy, in which her own mind is lost. With a golden bough and a consecrated sword, with *metallic* exciters of the nervous influence, his way to gain spiritual communications is prepared. From spirits called up by a *triple* invocation, not from the Sibyl herself, he is to learn. From the shade of his father, Anchises, he receives communications; and his responses first present the theory by which spirits are supposed to communicate with the living, through the nervous principle (spiritus), and the intelligent principle (mens), which pervade the universe. And finally the secret is revealed, that not at all an actual descent of Æneas to the spirit-world has the philosophic poet recorded; any more than Bunyan, in his Pilgrim, writes anything but allegory. It is in magnetic trance, in sleeping vision, Æneas and the Sibyl have gained their communications; for from the ivory gate of "sleep" Anchises at last releases them. In another picture, free from allegory,

[1] Horace's Odes, B. I., No. 11; Satire III., verses 80, 278.

Virgil expressly calls the maiden having the prophetic furor one "deranged in intellect;" he describes as perfectly as our Salem ancestors saw it the wild-fire spread of the uncontrollable excitement among her companions of like temperament, and paints to life the magic art.[1] There is philosophy worthy of modern study here.

We have seen thus in Rome's poets the two extreme views of spiritual manifestations. In her *practical* writers we shall meet the middle view; which admits the facts, and refers them to a natural and sufficient cause, that of the nervous principle, or spiritual medium. The story-telling Plutarch, who wrote in the later Roman age, and in the Greek language, was so interested in these subjects as to pen two books; the one on the question, "Why Pythia does not now give Oracles in Metre;" and the other, "Concerning the Cessation of Oracular Responses." Discussing the first question, he presents the theory that "the body of the dead passes into plants, and thence into animals; and so in the entrails of the animal the spirit of the dead may appear. God uses the prophetic maiden as the sun does the moon, to reflect from her his thought. The enthusiasm called the divine instinct, seen in her, is from two sources, from a bodily affection, and from the mind's nature. She speaks in poetry on the same principle that astrologers and philosophers, and even men full of wine, and minds under any strong excitement, break out in song. No grave questions now are presented;

[1] Virgil's Æneid, Book VI., vers. 46—50, 100—102, 137, 260, 506, 893—8; and VII., 376—396. Also Eclog. VIII.

no excitement of war, sedition, of tyranny, and fearful calamity, calls forth the frenzy. The trifling inquiries of servants and young women, to itinerant fortune-tellers, about marriage, their health, &c., are unworthy an answer in verse. Finally, as it is puerile to admire the rainbow, and rings about the sun and moon, and comets, more than the sun and moon, so the fondness for enigmas and allegories in obscure poetry is not becoming those who employ reason to gain a knowledge of God."[1] On the second theme, Plutarch gives a brief history of oracles, from Egypt and its priests to Britain and its Druids. "In Greece the oracle had ceased, chiefly on account of the insignificant inquiries made at the shrine. Divination, however, remained. Through the demons or genii (of which Homer spoke in general terms, but the later Greeks more philosophically), knowledge from the spirit world is gained. There is a universal medium; for, since there are very many worlds, and to each one its own medium, and at the same time its own peculiar motion, in some to the medium, in some from it, and in some around it, all gravitating (βαρη, gravia) substances must on all sides be drawn together towards one medium.[2] The knowledge gained by this medium some regarded as supernatural. It is in reality natural; a faculty of our minds. Memory in us is as the hearing of deaf persons, and the seeing of the blind;

[1] Plutarchi Opera, Lipsiae, 1777; vol. VII., pp. 566, 592—594, 604, 607, 608, and 611.

[2] The *germ*, it would almost seem, of Newton's law of gravitation.

therefore it is not wonderful if, apprehending, as it does, many things which have ceased to be, it also gains knowledge of many which do not yet exist. Since, therefore, souls have this power of mind innate, yet hidden, some suddenly manifest it in dreams or at sacrifices, and employ it. Probably it is as when wine, its vapors being borne to the brain, produces great movement in the mind; for the chief power of divining is in the raving and furor. Moreover, it is not equable, but subject to changes. It is extinguished in great rains, is dissipated in places where lightning is prevalent, and especially subsides in an earthquake. A certain tempering of the air and the wind affects it. It vehemently excites the frame." "I wish not to call into doubt anything which is regarded divine. I will free myself from the charge, Plato being called out as my witness and defender. For he blamed Anaxagoras the ancient, because, too much immersed in natural causes, and always seeking after and tracing out the necessity of those affections which occur in natural bodies, he omitted the final and efficient cause, the more exalted in the order of causes, and the more potent principles. In the mean time, Plato himself was the first or most prominent of all philosophers in uniting these two; so that, indeed, he ascribed to God the origin of those things which are performed through a general principle. We do not make divination to occur without God, or without a general principle, when we regard the human soul (animum) as its subject, and the spirit (spiritum) or

vapors of enthusiasm as its instrument."[1] Read thoughtfully, Charles, these statements; and bear witness that our supposition was no *novelty;* it was not baseless in reason, nor repugnant to religion.

Another work of this same age will naturally attract our notice. Here are ranged twelve large quarto volumes, the works of Pliny, the naturalist,[2] who closed his long life's investigations, when, in pressing on to behold nearer the belching flames of Vesuvius, the smoke suffocated him, and, wrapping his mantle about his head, he fell amid the ashes that were burying Pompeii. Draw we out the tenth volume, and turn we to his thirtieth book. We have already read the long Latin commentary here introduced at the bottom of the pages; and now we will glance at Pliny's own text. "Magical vanities," — these are the first words that strike our eyes. Surely here is a cool practical man, of the observing cast, not likely to be carried away by deceptive appearances, but leaning rather to the opposite extreme, to which a mind given to observation of material facts is sure to tend. We will hear him, and then we shall have the other side. "By fraudulent arts often the science of the Magi has gained wide hold on the belief of all ages and nations.[3] Its relation to medicine gave it its first grasp on human belief; and its connection with religion on the one hand, and mathematical science

[1] Plutarchi Opera, vol. VII., pp. 613, 621, 627, 631—633, 639, 658, 659, 665, 698, 699, 702, 708, 712, 715, 718.

[2] See the Paris edition of 1778, already referred to.

[3] Pp. 138, 140.

on the other, has confirmed its controlling power over the intellect and the heart."[1] Taking possession thus of the senses of man by its *triple* appeal to the bodily, intellectual and moral wants of men, Pliny traces its history from Zoroaster to his day. Everywhere the medicinal virtue attributed to it seems to be its introduction; reminding us of the chief promise of kindred developments in our day. At the head of the Jewish Magi he mentions Moses;[2] no unimportant testimonial, coming from one of Pliny's age, nation and personal character. The Druids of old Gaul and Britain he refers to "this class of prophets and medical men."[3] Of the methods by which knowledge of spiritual things is gained, he mentions, that it is sought "by water, and spheres, and air, and stars, and lamps, and basins, and axes, and by conversations with disembodied spirits, and with inferior deities."[4] He gives an account, then, of the famed magician, Tiridates, from whom Nero in vain sought to draw his art; and states his conclusion, that though the art is in general injurious and useless, "yet it has some shades of truth."[5]

He closes by mentioning that the "celebrated grammarian, Apion, whom he had seen when a young man, had published that there was an herb named *cynocephalia* (in Egypt called *osyrites*), which enabled a man to divine, and secured him against all poisons; and Apion declared that he himself had called up departed spirits, in order to inquire of Homer of what country

[1] Pp. 142—148. [2] P. 164. [3] P. 166.
[4] Pp. 168, 170. [5] P. 178.

and what ancestors he was born; while, nevertheless, he did not dare to publish what he had replied."[1] Surely Pliny gives us enough to show that the scenes of our day were familiar to Apion and himself, and that the same views as to their supernatural or natural origin then prevailed among thinking men. He decides that the influence certainly was connected with physical causes, arising from an excitement of the nervous organism by means of an intoxicating plant, or some other stimulant acting on the nervous system.

Are you weary of these old Latin authors? Be patient till we can look at one more, a Roman medical writer of the second century. Here, staring on the back of four tall folios, is the gilded title, "Galeni Opera," the works of Galen. Out we lift the cumbrous one marked Tom. III., and, turning to page 1497, read the article headed, "de Incantatione, Adjuratione et Suspensione," concerning incantation, adjuration and suspension (or the wearing of amulets). In a familiar letter, like ours, that early and most able, as well as voluminous medical writer, commences thus: "You have asked, my dearest son, concerning incantation, adjuration and suspension, if they can do any good; and if I have found them in the books of the Greeks, as they are found in the books of India." From his prolonged reply we copy these sentences. "Plato says, 'When the human mind loves anything, although it is not beneficial, it assures itself that the thing does it good; and, simply from the bias of mind, that thing

[1] P. 180.

does benefit the body. For example, if any one is confident that incantation will do him good, whatever may be his character, him, indeed, it does benefit.'"

Galen adds to this statement of Plato, "I have seen this, indeed, that there are causes of daily-recurring disorders of the health, especially of those disorders which spring from nervous affections. In healthy persons, indeed, the causes of infirmity have been these same ones. Whence Socrates says, 'Incantations are words leading astray rational minds, according to the inception of hope or the incitement of fear.' The Indian medical men only believe that the incantation and adjuration is an aid; while the ancient Grecian physicians thought by these to recall into the wandering soul its own perfection; which, being recovered, it was necessary that the body be recovered by it." Galen himself seems to adopt this explanation; "as the fluids of the body, being changed, change the action of the mind, so the action of the mind, being changed, changes the fluids." He speaks then of the reputed efficacy of amulets; saying of it, "which I do not deny can be done, on account of the conformation of the mind of which I have spoken." After a long enumeration of medicinal specifics of this kind, he thus concludes. "These things I have culled from the books of the ancients. * * I have not tried them; but yet they are not to be denied by me; because, if we had not seen the magnet attracting iron to itself, we should not be assured of it, we should not believe it. So also that lead breaks adamant, which iron does not do; that a

stone which is called *nitrum* is burned in the fire; and that a certain fish takes away the feeling of one seizing it. All which things, unless they are *seen* by us, are not believed; but, being tried, they are certain. And perhaps the sayings of the ancients have the same meaning. * * Sometimes certain substances have a property incomprehensible in its character, on account of its own subtilty; not appreciable to the senses, on account of its own inscrutableness." Thus this last and one of the greatest of the Roman philosophers decides that the mysteries of the spiritual medium are not to be denied; but that they have a general and natural, though incomprehensible, cause; and that the books of both the Greeks and Hindoos, from whom he gathered his facts, explained these phenomena virtually on the same principle. Moreover, in illustration of the natural agency, or property, by which spiritual communications are thus made, he adduces the very examples to which physiologists now refer; the mysterious properties of the *magnet*, and the *electric* power of the torpedo.

Letter Eighth.

THE FASCINATING MANIFESTATION OF THE SPIRITUAL MEDIUM, AS SEEN AND STUDIED BY THE IMAGINATIVE GREEKS.

—"Θυων τε γὰρ φανερός ἦν πολλάκις μὲν οἴκοι, πολλάκις δὲ ἐπὶ τῶν κοινῶν τῆς πόλεως βωμῶν, καὶ μαντικῇ χρώμενος οὐκ ἀφανὴς ἦν· διετεθρύλλητο γάρ, ὡς φαίη Σωκράτης, τὸ δαιμόνιον ἑαυτῷ σημαίνειν."—*Xenophon's Memorabilia.*

[For that he offered sacrifices was manifest, often at home, and often on the common altars of the city, and that he employed divination was not unapparent; for it was commonly reported that Socrates said the demon made communications to him.]

Who are "the Ancients."—The Greek Reflective.—Cicero a Roman-Greek.—Divination believed in by all the Greek Schools.—Facts and Reasonings as in our day.—Source, threefold: Illusion, Corporeal Causes, the Spiritual Medium.—Homer, his Spirits, Nervous Visions.—Hesiod, his Chain.—Pythagoras, "Music of the Spheres."—Plato, Intermediate Principle.—Conclusion as in Later Ages.

My Dear Charles:

When did "the ancients" live? Really, to reach them seems like reaching "the West," which ever retreats as we advance. The scholiast of the middle ages spoke of the ancients as his authorities; and when we had gone back to the old Roman writers, we might have thought we had reached our limit. But now Plutarch and Pliny and Galen are found still pointing

us back. "Alps on Alps arise;" and if we would gain the topmost peak for a look-out, many a distant summit is yet to be climbed. Courage, Charles, and we shall breathe a higher air yet.

As the Roman was practical, so the Greek was reflective. Dreams of the imagination filled his mind, and in art he embodied them. To him the excitement of the nervous principle gave a pleasing thrill, and its undue manifestations were to him most fascinating. This was the Greek characteristic; though all classes of minds met and clashed with each other in Athens.

Cicero was a true Greek, though not born on Grecian soil. He defended the use of the Greek language by his countrymen, he loved Grecian studies, and drank deeply into the spirit of Greece. So thoroughly Grecian is his discussion of the subject we are tracing, that we must read him among the Greeks as their interpreter.

Shall we steal up and look over the shoulder of the masterly Cicero, as in the maturity of his years he pens down, in two lengthy books on "divination," the thoughts of his ripening age on the spiritual medium? With the fervor of a sincere heart, he eloquently argues the certainty that there is a medium by which we gain knowledge of the spirit world, and of events which only by spiritual intuition can be known; showing that among all nations, and by the ablest philosophers of all nations, divination has been believed and practised; among the Greeks, for example, Pythagoras and Socrates, the Academy, the Peripatetics, and the Stoics,

all but the Epicurean, cherishing faith in it; the idealist and materialist extremes, and the mediating rationalist, all agreeing that mysterious knowledge is derived from the spiritual medium, while the sceptic alone doubted.[1]

As to the mode of its *manifestation* and its concomitants, he gives scattered hints. It shows itself when the mind of the diviner is dormant, either in sleep or in prophetic furor; and an intelligence from without utters its thought through the passive organs of the speaker; reminding us of the quiescence of the clairvoyant, and of the medium of our times.[2] It manifests itself, as Aristotle remarks, in unhealthy persons, especially those subject to melancholy;[3] it has the aspect of ordinary, strong mental excitement;[4] and Pythagoras thought that some kinds of diet, as beans, were unfavorable to its development;[5] all of which points to the nervous principle as the source. The Stoic hints that wonders of healing, and strange powers of reading and writing, accompanied the influence;[6] which seem the counterpart of the mysteries of our day.

Of its nature scattered hints from many a source are presented; through which, however, a chain of union seems to run. The Stoics thought there was much of it deception, and that all could be explained on natural principles. Cato said that he wondered that the sooth-

[1] Cicero de Divin., Lib. I., § 1, 39, &c.
[2] Ibid, I., 50.
[3] Ibid, I., 38.
[4] Ibid, I., 50.
[5] Ibid, II., 58.
[6] Ibid, II., 59.

sayer did not laugh when he saw his fellow-soothsayer.[1] He queried why it was that an insane man should know more of futurity than a sane one; and that the crazy girl, Cassandra, should be inspired, when the venerable and wise king, Priam, was not;[2] questions about the character of the medium, similar to those now heard. The Stoic compared the right responses of the diviner to the mysterious mental acumen sometimes shown by intoxicated persons;[3] and Democritus compared the eloquent language of the Pythoness to that of the poet under high artistic excitement;[4] a suggestion similar to an illustration already adduced for our times. Cicero says that an eminent Druid, an acquaintance of his, professed that a natural principle, which the Greeks called physiology, was known to himself; and that partly by auguries, partly by conjecture, he foretold the future.[5] Cicero himself, in an elaborate argument, refers the source to the sympathy by which human souls are linked to the soul of the world, through which, the spirit set free from the body (as some easily are), either when we are asleep or awake, really gains the knowledge of other spirits, and of the universal soul.[6] In what way this influence from without so mysterious is communicated cannot be explained, any more than can the mysteries of nature's simplest operations, as the growth of plants, and the healing action of medicines;[7] and forci-

[1] Cicero de Divin., Lib. II., 24.
[2] Ibid, I., 39; II., 54.
[3] Ibid, II., 59.
[4] Ibid, I., 37.
[5] Ibid, I., 41.
[6] Ibid, I., 49, 51, 52, and I., 60.
[7] Ibid, I., 7, 9, 51.

bly he remarks, "Ignorance of causes in a new thing produces wonder; but if there is the same ignorance in things familiar, we do not wonder."[1]

Of *dreams* Cicero speaks at length; and with their frequent remarkable agreement with fact, he, as well as many others, in both ancient and modern times, was specially impressed. Of these striking cases there seem to be two classes: dreams of future events, which afterwards become real; and dreams of events passing at the instant in some distant place, which are found to agree with facts which were at the moment occurring. As to the first class there may be various explanations. As dreams are but a continuance of our waking thoughts, it may be that in one case of thousands, our imagination, or dreaming conjecture, may be correct, accordant with fact; and this accidental agreement seems striking only because the thousand wrong conjectures are overlooked, and the single right conjecture is remembered. It may be, further, that a dream — for instance, of success or failure in any enterprise — may so affect the mind and through it the bodily powers, that this itself will insure the fulfilment of the dream. As to the second class, the same may be true: the one right conjecture may be reported, while a thousand wrong ones may be unreported; or the kindred impression resting on two minds at a distance from each other, — for instance, the conviction of both the sick man and of his absent friend that he will not survive long, — this

[1] Cicero de Divin., Lib. II., 22.

impression may induce the dream of the latter and the death of the former; and that at points of time so near that the dream will seem to be a revelation of the death. There are cases, however, where apparently the knowledge or thought of a person at a distance seems reported to the mind of the dreamer; as also apparently (though probably not really) the thought of absent persons seems reported through the medium, in the manifestations of our day. Suffice it to say, that Cicero, and men further back than he, referred all those cases to the action of the "Soul of the World" of Plato and the Indian philosophers, to the "animal spirits" of Descartes, to the "plastic spirit of the world" of Mather and Brattle's time, to the "nervous principle" of the modern physiologist. What has such a universal and uniform history must have a law. We may confidently trust there is a science here; though what it is, man may never know.[1]

Is it not now apparent, Charles, when we remember that the "Soul of the World" of the Platonist, and the "nature" of the Stoics, as seen in men excited by any natural cause, and the "nervous principle" now spoken of by the physiologist, are the same, — is it not apparent, as Cicero seems to conclude,[2] that different minds, after all, must reach about the same conclusion? The supernatural of the one is the natural of the other. The Platonic Cicero has his representatives now; and so

[1] Ibid, I., 20 et seq. As a modern instance, see "Watchman & Reflector," Boston, Oct. 14, 1852, vol. XXXIII., p. 168. See, also, Let. Fourth, p. 35, and Let. Tenth, p. 119.

[2] Ibid, II., 72.

have the Druid and Stoic, as well as the Aristotelian.

Galen makes special mention of the books of the Greeks. It is but a glance at what the great writers of that cultured land have said of the spiritual medium we can take.

Homer, writing in the infancy of his nation, speaks in the language of childhood of the spirit-world; like our own Shakspeare, representing spiritual manifestations as simple objects of sense. The spirits all bear the simple title "god;" and have an ethereal body in which they appear to men. As always, however, the unphilosophizing poet shows the belief that it was not the bodily eye which saw the spirits; but, the mind in dreamy revery, or in excited fancy, by the spiritual medium apprehended the vision. Achilles was first thoroughly convinced of the reality of the future life, and the spirit-world, when the shade of Patroclus, his slaughtered friend, appeared to him in a dream of the night;[1] and it was the still active nervous excitement, such as we often in broken slumbers experience, which painted the image before his mind's eye. In the intense ardor of hot debate, again, Achilles felt the hand and saw the glistening eye of the goddess Minerva, checking him; while no one under less nervous excitement beheld her.[2] With Hesiod commenced the philosophic theories of the Greeks as to the world of disembodied spirits, and the

[1] Homer's Iliad, B. XXIII., verses 62, 105.

[2] Ibid, B. I., verses 197, 198.

connection we have with it. Hesiod, we are told, was the first of the Greeks to suggest that sublime conception, that all spiritual beings and material existences are united by a chain (σειρὰ), so that a positive influence and movement can be exerted by one spirit on other spirits and bodies. In his writings the word "demons" is first fixed, as signifying these intermediate agents and influences.[1] Pythagoras followed; and by him and his pupils was built up that majestic theory which is described in the "Soul of the World," by Timæus; that almost Newton-like theory of mutual attractions, which holds worlds in their places, and makes them give forth, as they move in their orbits, the "music of the spheres."[2] Socrates, the popular and practical philosopher of Athens, as Xenophon records, performed the accustomed sacrifices which made up the external religion of his countrymen; and he employed divination as a means of gaining knowledge not attainable in the natural methods. Yet his countrymen doubted his hearty belief in these. Socrates' real belief was this: "The people who sought knowledge of the future through sacrifices, birds and fortuitous events, did not suppose that the *birds* knew the future; but that the gods communicated through them. Thus he believes. He thought men should use their own judgment in deciding about their affairs. Through the demon (τὸ δαιμόνιον), the spiritual medium, the gods (θεοὶ) did,

[1] See Eschenberg, and various authorities.

[2] History of Philosophy: transl. from the French, by Henry, 107—110, and various authorities.

in divination, communicate with men; but it was wrong to inquire from them about trifling matters; for though they know all things, yet they made revelations only of human duty."[1] Plato perfected that system which resolved all immaterial principles (the chemical and capillary attractions between particles of matter, the magnetic attraction drawing material bodies to each other, and the wider attraction holding worlds in their places) into one "circle," or ring, of influences. These, as we have seen, he distinguished from pure spirit, the ultimate cause of existences, the Divinity; and through this intermediate system of agency, excited by the desire of the inquirer, he accounted for the wonderful knowledge and wonderful influences gained from divination and incantation.[2]

We part with the reflective Greek as from the practical Roman, having gathered from him the same views. From Hippocrates to Aristotle, as we have seen, the practical Greek reasoned as did the French Academy about animal magnetism. Even the pure rationalist, who was the leading type of the Greek mind, we now behold receiving the facts, and referring them to three classes of causes still bearing Grecian names, "physiological, psychological, demoniacal." The latter is their name for the spiritual medium.

[1] Xenophon's Memorabilia, Lib. I., cap. i., §§ 2, 9, and 19; also, Let. Seventh, p. 77.

[2] See Cicero, Plutarch and Galen, as already quoted, pp. 78,81, 85.

Letter Ninth.

THE MAGICAL DISPLAY OF THE SPIRITUAL MEDIUM AS UNDERSTOOD AND PRACTISED IN ANCIENT AND MODERN INDIA AND EGYPT.

"Quaesisti, fili carissime, de incantatione, adjuratione et suspensione; si qua possunt prodesse, et si invenerim in libris Graecorum hoc, qualiter in libris Indorum est invenire." — *Galen.*

[You have asked, dearest son, concerning incantation, adjuration, and the wearing of amulets; whether they can serve any curative purpose; and whether I have found this in the books of the Greeks, as it is found in the books of the Hindoos.]

"The art of divination, as practised in our temples, is derived from Egypt. * * * These ceremonies in Greece are but of modern date; whereas in Egypt they have been in use from the remotest antiquity." — *Herodotus.*

Champollion's Clues. — Wonders of India. — Serpents charmed. — Nervous Swoons. — Detecting Thieves. — Man buried a Month. — Religious Trances. — Nervous Contest. — Stone raised. — Brazen Vessel moved. — Uniform Explanation. — Trial by Rice. — "Special Agent." — Fearful Initiation. — Magic an Art. — Hindoo Philosophy of Magic. — Serpent Charmers in Egypt. — Serpent drawn from Wall. — Goat Charmer. — History of Charms. — Magnetizing Magician. — Clairvoyance in Egypt. — "Special Agent" universal. — A Law. — Ancient History uniform. — Blindfold Somnambule. — Healing by Magnetism. — Phenomena ever the same.

My Dear Charles:

While Champollion was during twenty long years bending his acute mind to the search for a key to decipher Egyptian hieroglyphic records, he had three clues to guide him in the labyrinth. He had the modern

Coptic language and the ancient Egyptian monuments as the *extremes*. He had also stumbled on an obscure passage in that old Christian Father, Clement of Alexandria, describing the principle of hieroglyphic writing as in his day still practised; and this, together with the Greek tablet of the Rosetta stone, formed the *means* for his comparison. We too, Charles, have modern scenes in India and Egypt, and ancient Hindoo books and Egyptian monuments, for our extremes. We have also stumbled on an old Christian scholiast who describes to us the principle of the magical display of the spiritual medium, which he tells us he gained from "most ancient monuments;" and this, with the Greek and Roman authorities intervening, is our means for comparison.

Enter we, then, old India, the land whose name from the days of Alexander, and even Solomon, has been but a synonym for boundless wealth, but whose reputation as the fountain-head of science, philosophy and mysterious arts, dates back to an even earlier day. We can trace in her history, in unbroken series, magical displays of the power of the spiritual medium, such as throw into the shade all we of this New World have yet seen. So wondrous are they that intelligent English officers, physicians, clergymen and general scholars, who have gone thither sceptical and prejudiced, have reported in numberless authenticated narratives the story of their convincing eye-sight, and have declared that the half was not told them in their land.

Serpents and *birds* are drawn and held as by a charm. An eminent physician, sceptical on this point,

in company with other English gentlemen, thus tested the fact. Taking a serpent charmer alone, they brought him to a distant heap of rubbish; and, causing him to lay off all his raiment, that there might be no deception practised upon them, they watched his movements. Approaching the pile with a serpent-like hiss, and a nervous working of the features and limbs, which became more and more excited and violent, presently serpent after serpent of the most venomous kind showed their heads, and gradually moved towards the charmer; until, reaching out his hand, he took them as so many lifeless withes, and deposited them in his basket.[1] Numberless attested instances of a similar kind might be given; the operator winding the serpent about his neck, pressing it fold after fold into his mouth, and rendering it rigid as a stick or pliant as a cord, at his pleasure. Back to the most ancient days this power can be traced. Aelian, a Greek writer of the fourth century, describes the same power as exhibited at his day, and says that it is a faculty handed down in certain families, from father to son, uninterruptedly.[2]

By throwing themselves into a *nervous swoon*, females, as well as men trained to the art, do succeed in relieving certain bodily diseases, and in discovering the place where stolen property is hid, and the persons who have taken it.[3] The following instance gives a description of

1 "Modern India, by Henry H. Spry, M.D., F.R.S., M.R.A.S., Bengal Medical Staff, London, 1837;" vol. I., pp. 209 et seq.

2 Aelian, Lib. II., cap. 57.

3 "Description of the Character, Manners and Customs, of the

the process. A crowd gathered near the house of an English resident, an author, near Benares. Some persons wished to gain information of stolen goods; and an old woman, a practiser of the art of divining, had been brought from the city. The crowd sat down in a circle around in the open field, and the woman was placed in the centre. Soon she began to rock and roll as if in spasms, her agitation becoming more and more violent, until, in a paroxysm of frenzy, she threw herself on the ground, and rolled convulsed. The interrogators listened to her mutterings, and from them learned where their property was to be found.[1] Of this power of throwing one's self into a voluntary swoon cases almost incredible are reported. The same English writer just quoted reports an instance which "some European officers, whose evidence seemed unimpeachable, asserted in writing that they saw." A devotee, on a wager, submitted to the following test. After giving directions what should be done to him, he threw himself into a swoon. He was then sewed in a bag, placed in a box, and buried in a tomb built of solid brick-work. The door was then bricked up and sealed, and sentries placed before it for a whole month. The tomb was then opened, and his body taken out. His mouth, as he directed beforehand, was pried open, and a little milk poured into it; and, though he had been without food, drink and air, for thirty days, he revived and sat up. The next day he was able

People of India, by the Abbe J. A. Dubois, transl. from a French manuscript, Philadelphia, 1818;" vol. II., part II., chap. 36.

[1] "Recollections of Northern India, by Rev. Wm. Buyers, London, 1848," p. 374.

to mount a camel and start off on a journey, expressing himself in very indignant terms that the parties who had put him to the test did not remunerate him more liberally for his trouble. The writer adds, "I read a few weeks ago, in an Indian paper, that the same devotee had repeated the same feat at some other place, with equal success."[1] No one accustomed to witness the swooning of persons under strong religious excitement, especially of the colored race, in certain sections of our country, can help believing in the reality of these nervous trances. What mysterious influences may be seen working during them, facts alone can decide.

A wondrous *power over the nervous influence of others*, and over *material objects*, is seen in the Indian devotee. The French writer before quoted[2] records the following instance. Two rivals wish to attest their superior powers. A stone or piece of money is placed on the ground, and the trial is to see which will first raise it *without touching it*. They advance towards the object, opposite each other, flinging "enchanted cinders" and reciting "mantras;" when both, by "an invisible but irresistible force," are repelled and driven back. They again approach, with new effort and excitement, the sweat pouring from them and blood gushing from their mouths, until one of them gets possession of the stone or piece of money. Sometimes one of the combatants is thrown violently on the ground by the nervous power of his antagonist; and, taken up breath-

[1] Buyer's Northern India, pp, 369, 370.

[2] Dubois' People of India, vol. II., chap. 36.

less, he lies for days as if weakened by sickness. The writer thinks that there is some collusion and deception in these strange phenomena; but he remarks, "It must be owned that effects are occasionally produced by them of which it would not be easy to divine the cause." The reader familiar with Mather's records of witchcraft will remember that he has recorded instances of a similar unaccountable nervous repulsion; the hand of a person striking at an imaginary image flying back, as if repelled by an irresistible force.[1]

Instances of the moving of material objects, particularly metallic, "without touching" them, far more palpable than that just mentioned, may be cited. An English writer[2] just cited records the following. A friend of his, after reading in his Bible one day, laid down his gold spectacles; and, having gone out a short time, when he returned he found his spectacles were gone. He knew that no person, except his servants, of whom he had fifteen or sixteen, could have entered the room. Calling them, he charged the theft upon them. To clear themselves, the servants all declared the Brahmin should be brought, to find out which was the thief. The Brahmin, having come, ranged all the servants in a row on one side of the room, while the gentleman himself stood by, watching the proceedings. Stationing himself in the centre of the room, which was a large hall, the Brahmin placed a small brazen vessel before him, and muttered some incantations. Then, leaving the vessel, he

1 Mather's Magnalia, Book VI., p. 75.

2 Buyer's Northern India, p. 375.

declared that, if the thief were in the room, it would, of itself, move to him. To the great astonishment of all, the vessel began to move, with no visible hand near it, and, sliding apparently of its own accord along the floor, it went straight to one of the servants. The man confessed the theft, and produced the missing spectacles. The writer concludes, "My old friend was no believer in the supernatural powers claimed by these men; but he was quite confounded at the result, and could never venture an explanation of the curious affair."

A glance now at the views of the *source* of these phenomena entertained in all ages in India is most instructive. The popular belief at the present day is that these manifestations are *supernatural*.[1] The intelligent observer finds a resort to *physiological* law, which in part explains them; the serpent charmer using from childhood a drug, whose properties become infused through his system;[2] and the Brahmins using incense in their incantations, to produce a similar influence on themselves and others.[3] To a *psychological* cause, the influence of fear on both mind and body, the learned student has referred a part of the phenomena; such a reporter giving the following general practice as an illustration.[4] When a theft has been committed in a house, the Brahmin is called and the whole family assembled. Sitting in the centre of the circle, the

[1] Spry's Modern India, vol. II., p. 125.
[2] Dubois' People of India, vol. II., chap. 36.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Spry's Modern India, p. 31.

Brahmin produces a little brass balance, and, putting a mysterious old rupee into one scale, he deals out a portion of rice equal to its weight to each one of the circle. Calling then on each to eat his portion, he declares that the rice in the culprit's mouth will remain dry and unmasticated. Fear so acts on the guilty person's nervous system that he cannot eat.[1] The Brahmin *knows* this; and his trial is generally successful.

Yet back of these causes, or superadded to them, is another, unexplained, the "special agent" of the French Academy. The facts are the same, the cause manifestly is the same, and the reasoning of intelligent men in all ages as to that cause has been the same, with what we have beheld in many another land and age. One writer refers it to the power called mesmeric.[2] He pictures also the appalling scene of initiation[3] to which the practisers of these arts subject every one who would enter their fraternity. In the dense jungle, far from human habitation, over a charcoal fire a small brass kettle filled with mysterious ingredients is placed, and around it in a circle skulls and bones are strewn. By this kettle, in this hideous circle, with tigers and hyenas prowling around, the candidate is all night long to remain seated, gazing at and stirring its contents.[4] If, unmoved, never for a moment diverted, he persists all night, that is a man who has any imaginable command

[1] As the *agitated* speaker has a *dry* voice; the *calm*, a clear, mellow one.

[2] Buyer's Northern India, p. 369. [3] Do., p. 372.

[4] The admirer of Shakspeare will remember the counterpart of this scene in Macbeth, Act IV., Scene 1st

over his nervous system. The whole appearance and the entire proceedings of these devotees indicate that it is the nervous principle which they employ in working the wonders which every intelligent observer is convinced are real.

Going back to the *ancients*, we find their view agreeing in that we have already considered. Back to India, as the mother of the art, they all refer the facts, and the philosophy of those facts. Pliny ascribes the origin of magic to Zoroaster; and the renowned magician from whom Nero sought to learn his art was a Chaldean.[1] In the earliest times it was an *art*, a secret knowledge of natural principles; one, however, which a Nero could not buy. Galen mentions the "Indian physicians" as healing by incantation, through knowledge of a hidden principle of our nature, similar to the attractive power of the magnet. Most of all, to the books of the Indians Galen especially refers.[2] Through the laborious studies of Colebroke[3] European scholars have regained the knowledge, familiar to the Greeks and Romans, that *India* is the fountain-head of that philosophy which Plato and Cicero, and the idealist of every age since, has agreed in; either adopting it from others, or having it suggested by his own peculiar bent of mind. In India, in the earliest days, prevailed the theory[4] that

[1] See Let. Seventh, p. 80. [2] Ibid, p. 81.

[3] Essays by Colebroke, in Transactions of the Asiatic Society of London, from 1824 to 1829.

[4] See Epitome of History of Philosophy, translated from the French by Dr. Henry, pp. 24, 25, 35, 36.

all qualities, all attracting influences in nature (which we know to be *intermediate* between spirit and matter), make up the soul of the world, of which human spirits are a part; through which, since in it there is an active and a passive, a negative and a positive force, one man's soul can control another's soul and body, and move material objects, as teaches the scholiast of the middle ages.[1] Cousin, the great historian of ancient and modern philosophy, echoes this statement, when, in speaking of Indian mysticism, he quotes and adopts Colebroke's exposition of the nature of magic. "This power consists in being able to take all forms; * * it consists in changing the course of nature, and in acting upon inanimate as well as upon animate things."[2]

Turn we now to Egypt. Make with me, Charles, a day's tour of examination about Cairo, the present capital of that country, and observe we the wonders now exhibited there. Mounted on our little donkeys, we patter along the narrow crowded alleys, to the bazaar. As we approach this covered mart, towards which the crowd all day throng, among the innumerable novel scenes around see seated yonder the serpent charmer. Forth from his covered basket he draws a fearful, poisonous snake. He coils him about his neck like a ribbon; he puts his head into his mouth, and presses in fold after fold of his body, till even the tail is shut in and concealed, and then draws him slowly forth again. Again,

[1] See Letter Sixth. p. 63.

[2] "Cours de Philosophie," translated by H. O. Wight, second series, vol. II., Sect. 6.

he stretches him straight like a rod, and lays him on the ground, while so like a stick he seems, so stiff and motionless, you might readily pick him up for a cane. His power over the serpent is not the extracting of his deadly fangs, for you see them glistening in his mouth. Nor is it that the serpent has been domesticated; for, as you pass on, you may see another of these serpent charmers, who has been called to draw forth and capture a serpent hid under a house, or within its walls, seated for an hour before the hole which the serpent has entered, and looking intently at it with a flushed and nervous aspect, hissing the mean while, until you behold the untamed and deadly intruder drawn slowly forth from his lurking-place towards the charmer, who takes him like a coil of cord harmless in his hand, and places him in his basket. Moreover, a little further on you may see a goat perched on the slender point of a rod, and slowly raised higher and higher, while his master sings with more and more of frenzy; till suddenly the song and nervous influence cease, the charm is broken, and the little animal falls like a dead weight from his pointed perch. No beholder can doubt that by the power of the nervous principle the charmer has control over the vital nervous energy of the animate creation.

From time immemorial, now, this same power has been seen in Egypt, and described. The ablest English resident writers have pictured it.[1] The French savans, under

1 Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians, by E. W. Lane, London, 1836; vol. II., chap. VII., pp. 103, 104.

Napoleon, fifty years ago, extensively investigated it,[1] learning that it was a secret art, handed down like the ancient mysteries of Egypt. The ancient Greeks and Romans found the practisers of this art in Egypt; the Greeks calling them by the expressive name "Psylli," or *spiders*. Strabo, among many allusions to it, especially describes this power over the serpent, as seen in Egypt. Aelian further relates, "They are said to be enabled, by a magical art, to bring down birds from heaven, and to charm serpents so as to make them come forth from their lurking-places at command."[2] The student of the past, who has learned to give a high place among authentic historic records to the books of Moses, will have no hesitation in recognizing the same art at an earlier date of Egyptian history.[3]

Ride we now to behold a similar power exercised on the human frame, and a control more mysterious exercised on rational minds. The famed magician, Sheikh Abd-el Kâder, seated on a mat in his little room, orders a brasier of burning coals to be brought and placed at his side, while he sits writing on slips of paper invocations to the spirits. A boy is called, on the palm of whose hand the magician draws a rude square, with inner lines parallel to each side. In the eight outer

[1] See Description de l'Egypt, Etat Moderne, Tome Second, II.e Partie, pp. 5, 22, 23; also Egypt and the Books of Moses, by Hengstenberg, trans. by Robbins, Andover, 1843, pp. 100—105, and his references to *Quatremère*.

[2] Aelian, Lib. I., cap. 57; and Strabo, Book XIII., p. 588; and Book XVII., p. 814.

[3] Exod. 7: 11, 12.

compartments thus formed are inscribed in Indian (or Hindoo, showing the origin of the art) eight of the nine numerals, the figure *five* being placed in one corner of the central compartment.[1] In the centre a drop of ink from the magician's horn is deposited. Placing now his brasier between the boy and himself, and telling him to look intently at the ink-drop, the magician takes in his hand his slips of paper on which he has written his invocations. These slips of paper, each with a handful of incense, he throws, one after another, into the fire; muttering, meantime, the same invocations, till the smoke and perfume is almost overpowering and bewildering to the senses. All these preliminaries, the magical numbers, the burning incense, the invocations, are but impressive accompaniments of his real art, as we have already learned from the ancients. Then is seen his real power. Now, partly in leading questions, but soon without them, he causes the boy to see and describe whatever his own imagination chooses. Then, when sufficiently under his influence, the boy goes on to describe scenes known only to the spectators; persons and places in England and America, of which no one but the inquirer himself has knowledge. Sir Gardner Wilkinson, only once beholding this performance, and in that *one* trial having sent for the magician to come to a foreigner's house and to appear before a dignified circle, naturally might not make due allowance for the disturbing nervous influence thus exerted on the per-

[1] Lane's Modern Egypt, vol. i., chap. xii., pp. 347—357.

former;[1] just as Franklin and the first French commission beheld Mesmer's experiments under such a disturbing influence, and, therefore, at first, underrated them. But the able Mr. Lane,[2] long a resident in the East, and hundreds of ordinary observers, have witnessed a real unmistakable agent at work, similar to that admitted even by that first French commission. The power thus seen in different lands, and among different classes of men, must be a *natural* agent, placed by the Creator in all men; mysterious indeed, unexplained and perhaps inexplicable, yet *real*. Moreover, this influence is not modern, but *ancient;* in the East, as we have seen in Europe,[3] capable of being traced back indefinitely in the history of human nature. In the earliest times a distinction was made between the *science* and the *art*, between the *use* and *abuse* of this mysterious power; and all persons convicted of witchcraft were debarred from initiation into the sacred mysteries of Egypt.[4] The *modes* of *practising* sacred divination were the same; Clement of Alexandria describing "the prophet" in the Egyptian festival "carrying in his bosom a water jar,"[5] the *gastromantia*, so common in later

[1] Hand-book for Egypt, by Sir Gardner Wilkinson, F.R.S., &c. (Murray) London, 1847, pp. 151—154.

[2] Lane's Modern Egypt, vol. I., chaps. xi. and xii.

[3] See Let. Fifth, p 47.

[4] Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians, by J. G. Wilkinson, F.R.S., M.R.S.L., &c. London, 1837. Second Series, vol. II., p. 324.

[5] Clem. Alex. Stromata, B. VI., p. 196; quoted by Wilkinson in his Second Series, vol. II., p. 279.

ages, being an art of ancient Egypt. The *ends* aimed at were the same; the Egyptian oracles being consulted in cases of theft, and large rewards being paid by princes for successful information obtained.[1] The *influence seen* to be exerted was the same; Macrobius describing the priests bearing the images of the Heliopolitan deity as "borne on by a divine spirit, not at their own will, but whither the god impelled them;" and Herodotus mentioning that at the festival of Sais one of the priests was led "blindfold" to a spot, where, being left, he went (really alone, though, as the people believed, led by two wolves) a distance of twenty stadia (about two and three-fourths miles), to the temple of Ceres, and back;[2] which certainly resembles the blindfold guiding of the somnambule now seen. What is more interesting, the process of *healing* by Egyptian art seems the same as that now practised. Pliny describes the serpent charmers as having this healing power. "By contact" with the persons affected, "they are accustomed to alleviate the bite of serpents; and by laying on their hand, to extract poisons from the body."[3] Strabo more fully describes the process thus: "The *males* among these people, they say, heal those who are bitten by a viper, by repeatedly touching upon (συνεχῶς ἐφαπτομένους) the person, as the magicians are accustomed to do; and thus they transfer to them-

[1] Wilkinson, Second Series, vol. I., p. 153.

[2] Macrob. Saturn., I., 30; Herodt. II., 122; quoted by Wilkinson, Second Series, vol. II., pp. 298 and 310.

[3] Pliny, Lib. LX., cap. 2.

selves, first the livid hue, then the inflammation, and quiet the pain."[1] Here, then, we learn that in the most ancient times in Egypt, the "magicians" were accustomed to practise an art the very counterpart of the magnetizing of our day; while the "Psylli," or the serpent charmers, by the same process, actually wrought cures. Diodorus mentions that through dreams the Egyptian physicians sought a knowledge of the remedies proper to be prescribed for disease;[2] while, however, they closely examined the case itself, using their own judgment; thus showing that it was by an *art*, not by supernatural but by natural methods, they gained this knowledge. In referring to this, Wilkinson alludes to the fact that "the advocates of animal magnetism may see it in this passage." In immediate connection he thus alludes to the monuments of the ancient Egyptians: "Though their physicians are often mentioned by Herodotus and other writers, the only indication of medical attendance occurs in the paintings of Beni Hassan, where a doctor and patient are twice represented."[3] In both these representations the patient is on his knees, with one hand taking hold of the upper part of his other arm, and with the other hand grasping the calf of the physician's leg. In both the physician holds one hand on the head of the patient, while with the other

[1] Strabo, Lib. XIII., p. 588. See word *Psylli* in the Index for other references.

[2] Diodorus Siculus, Book I., § 25.

[3] Wilkinson's Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians, First Series, vol. III., p. 393; also, see Note on the same page.

hand, in one case, he administers a dose of medicine, and, in the other case, uses a surgical instrument. In a representation of a lady in the bath, two attendants seem to be making the mesmeric passes upon her; while a third holds to her nose a lotus-flower, apparently as an exhilarating drug.[1]

We have followed up our clue far back into the dark past, to find the fast end of this historic chain. And now, to fix our last deep impression of the uniform mysteries of the spiritual medium, listen we to a single sentence or two from the very oldest of the Grecian historians. As to the *uniform existence* of these phenomena in all ages, the same writer says: "The art of divination, as now practised in our temples, is derived from Egypt. * * These ceremonies in Greece are but of *modern* date; whereas in Egypt they have been in use from the *remotest antiquity*." As to the *uniform likeness* of these manifestations, that earliest of travelled writers describes as seen in his day cases of witchcraft, and trials and executions for it as demoniacal even in barbarous Scythia, which are the very counterpart of those lately seen in Salem.[2]

[1] Wilkinson's Man. and Cust. of Anct. Egyptians, First Series, vol. III., p. 389; also Let. Eleventh, p. 133.

[2] Herodotus, Book IV., § 68; Book II., §§ 54, 56, 58.

Letter Tenth.

THE MYSTERIES OF THE SPIRITUAL MEDIUM IN ANCIENT EGYPT AND ASSYRIA CONTRASTED WITH AND MADE TO ESTABLISH THE SUPERNATURAL IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

"And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians." "Now the magicians of Egypt, they also did the same with their enchantments; for they cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents. But Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods." "Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh, This is the finger of God." — Acts 7 : 22; Exod. 7 : 11, 12; 8 : 19.

And Daniel was taught "the learning and tongue of the Chaldeans." "Then the king made Daniel chief over the wise men of Babylon," "master of the magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans, and soothsayers." "The Chaldeans said, There is none other that can show it before the king, except the gods, whose dwelling is not with flesh." But "Daniel answered in the presence of the king, and said, The secret which the king hath demanded cannot the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers, show unto the king. But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets." — Daniel 1 : 4; 2 : 11, 48; 5 : 11; 2 : 27.

Old Testament "antiquated." — Science reveres Scripture. — Science behind Scripture. — Moses learned. — Eight Forms of Egyptian Mystery. — Not behind our Mysteries. — Scripture View of these. — Accredit Science. — Daniel among Magi. — Abuse of Science condemned. — The True Supernatural. — Magician's Testimony. — Magi's Testimony. — Picture of an Ancient Medium. — Why Men seek them. — Contrast of Natural and Supernatural. — Penalty of Curiosity. — Ancients appreciated these Things. — Christian Scholar in Egypt. — "Our Rock not as theirs."

My Dear Charles:

Why should the impression have been so widely disseminated, within a few years past, in our Christian land,

that the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are *antiquated* books; not to be regarded, in this age of advanced science, as "written by holy men of old, who wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit"? Surely, only *superficial* thinkers could ever come to such a conclusion. When Grotius, that master mind yet referred to by jurists of all nations as the founder of the science of international law, had spent his laborious life in comparing the fundamental principles of right, as taught in all nations and in all professedly sacred books, instead of arriving at the conclusion that the Old and New Testaments were antiquated books, he devoted some of his maturest years to the work of pointing out the imperfection and failure of all other religious systems, and of confirming the perfection and divine origin of the Christian Scriptures.[1] When Newton, following up and surpassing Copernicus and Galileo and Kepler, had reached and demonstrated the great laws of astronomy, instead of finding them in conflict with the Bible allusions, from being in youth a sceptic, he became in mature age one of the most enthusiastic believers in the revealed word of God.[2] When Champollion, taught to respect the early Christians by the aid one of them had given him, was traversing, after nearly twenty years' study of Egyptian hieroglyphics, the land of his eager research, and when, one evening, his boat's prow touched,

[1] The Truth of the Christian Religion, by Hugo Grotius, translated from the Latin by John Clarke, D.D. London, 1827.

[2] Observations on the Prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse. London, 1733.

about sunset, the shore of old Thebes, and he leaped ashore, and ran, like a curious child, up to the great temple of Karnac, his enthusiasm was prompted by the desire to confirm what he had long contended for against his sceptical fellow-savans, that one of the sculptures on that temple represented Pharaoh Shishak leading captive Rehoboam, King of Judah; a fact which, that evening, with reverential joy, he was permitted to establish, and thus to lay down this incident as an undisputed landmark, from which all comparative chronology of historical events may be surely reckoned.[1] The ablest geologists of our day are the warmest opponents of the idea that the Sacred Scriptures, as respects their science, are antiquated records. No man of science has ever studied the Old Testament without *revering* it.

Why, then, in the infant development of these spiritual phenomena, newly seen among us, — why should we suppose them to be in advance of the book we reverence as our only sure spiritual guide? A very brief reflection, Charles, will impress the mind with the fact that the writers of these Scriptures, entirely aside from their divine inspiration, were *far in advance* of us in their knowledge of the spiritual medium, and its manifestations. The mere recollection in what age and among what men they lived, were educated and wrote, is enough to establish this. An added glance,

[1] Ancient Egypt, by Geo. R. Gliddon. New York, 1843. Chap. I., p. 9; and Egypt's Place in Universal History, by Ch. C. J. Bunsen, D. Ph., and D. C. L., translated by C. H. Cottrell, Esq. London, 1848. Book I., sect. iii., pp. 164, 165.

however cursory, at their frequent allusions to the phenomena witnessed in our day, will satisfy any sincere mind that the spiritual difficulties which the reflective of our day encounter are here all anticipated; both the *difficulty* and the *mode of meeting it* being taught. Happy, thrice happy, the inquiring anxious spirit, that shall also here find an attested guide sent from heaven, to lead our doubtful, erring steps through this dark spiritual pilgrimage of earth!

Moses, living in Egypt in the palmy days of her antiquity, and "learned in *all the wisdom* of the Egyptians," wrote the earliest, and, of course, the most difficult, of these volumes. Familiar with the power over spiritual influences, known to the *initiated* in his day, he specially mentions, in one connection,[1] *eight* different species of the practice of this control over the nervous influence. There was, first, "the user of *divination;*" a mode of gaining knowledge of future events employed among the rude tribes, on the south of ancient Palestine;[2] three kinds of which, by arrows, or rods, by sculptured images, and by the entrails of animals, are mentioned by Ezekiel;[3] and the sin of which is characterized as rebellion against God.[4] There is, second, "the observer of times," or of *dreams;*[5] a reliance on dreams as revelations from the spirit world having been common in Egypt and Assyria, in Philistia

[1] Deut. 18 : 10.
[2] Josh. 13 : 22; 1 Sam. 6 : 2.
[3] Ezek. 21 : 21.
[4] 1 Sam. 15 : 23.
[5] See Vulgate.

and among the Israelites,[1] as it was afterwards among the Greeks and Romans. There was, *third*, the "enchanter," or *serpent charmer;*[2] this practice seeming to have been accompanied with the same mutterings and charms now employed;[3] the possessors of this art in the earliest times, and among various Eastern nations, being supposed able to reveal secrets of the spiritual world.[4] There was, *fourth*, the "witch," or *sorceress;* men and women who divined by administering to themselves, or to others, exhilarating and poisonous drugs, which acted like the mephitic gas of Delphi on the Pythoness, and like the modern magician's incense; a class most dangerous in Egypt, Assyria, Canaan, and elsewhere.[5] There was, *fifth*, the "charmer" by the power of song; a mode of exerting a soothing or stupefying influence on the nervous system, both of beasts and men, now used in the East, mentioned by Xenophon as common in Greece,[6] and employed successfully, both on *man* and *beast*, among the *ancient Israelites.*[7] There was, *sixth*, "the consulter of familiar spirits," the *ventriloquist*, or the diviner by "basins" or vases,[8] alluded

[1] Gen. 40 : 8 et seq. Dan. 2 : 4 et seq. 2 Kings 21 : 6; 2 Chron. 33 : 6; Isa. 2 : 6; Micah 5 : 12.

[2] See Septuagint. [3] Psal. 58 : 4, 5.

[4] Gen. 44 : 5: Lev. 19 : 26; Numb. 23 : 3, 15, 23; 24 : 1; 2 Kings 17 : 17; 21 : 6.

[5] Exod. 7 : 11; 22 : 17; 2 Kings 9 : 22; 2 Chron. 33 : 6; Isa. 47 : 12; Jer. 27 : 9; Mic. 5 : 12; Nah. 3 : 4.

[6] Xen. Mem., II., v, 10, 11.

[7] See Sept. on 1 Sam. 16 : 23, and Ps. 58 : 6.

[8] Compare the Hebrew and Greek.

to by Pliny and the Latin scholiast; a class of persons who excited a nervous influence in boys employed for their purposes, by causing them to gaze intently into the vases; from which they seemed to call up spirits of the dead, and to cause them to speak, while, really, they spoke from their own abdomens;[1] a class of diviners common in remote antiquity.[2] There was, *seventh*, the "wizard," the Magian, or wise one; men, probably, who, from their own mental power, without added *arts*, had gained the reputation of supernatural knowledge.[3] There was, *eighth*, the "necromancer," or consulter of departed spirits.[4] Besides these varied classes of persons, believed to have supernatural power, there were yet other classes; such as "the astrologers, star-gazers, and monthly prognosticators," mentioned by Isaiah.[5] Sufficient, certainly, are these, to show that the writers of the Old Testament were not behind our age, but far before it, in their acquaintance with the wonders of the spiritual medium.

Most important is it now to observe what view of the *character* of these manifestations is presented by the inspired writers of the Old Testament. Three points here are instructive. In the first place, the *facts are admitted*. A real influence, mysterious in its charac-

[1] Compare 1 Sam. 28 : 8, with Isa. 8 : 19 and 29 : 4.

[2] Lev. 19 : 31; 20 : 6, 27; Isa. 19 : 3; 2 Kings 21 : 6; 2 Chron. 33 : 6.

[3] Mentioned Lev. 19 : 31; 20 : 6, 27.

[4] Found only Deut. 18 : 11; though other classes of diviners used this art, 1 Sam. 28 : 11.

[5] Isa. 47 : 13.

ter, is *stated* to be put forth. The Egyptian magicians do change their serpents into rods. Young David by the power of music does alleviate the nervous malady and suffering of Saul; and a genuine prophet like Elisha sometimes sees fit to employ the minstrel as an exciter of the spirit of prophecy.[1]

Again, the *source* of this *influence* is treated as *natural*. Moses nowhere ascribes the power of the magicians to evil spirits. On the contrary, the two names[2] which he gives them are these: "sacred writers," the original word having come down through various intermediate tongues to our language, always in a *good sense*, and as a word of *science;*[3] and "learned men," a name dignified in the corresponding Greek, and a title of high respect still given by the modern Arab to those only among foreign travellers whom he thinks specially skilled in science and art.[4] Thoroughly acquainted with all the wisdom of the Egyptians, Moses recorded the *facts* he witnessed as exhibitions of the *science* and *art* of "learned men" and "sacred writers." As late as the days of Nebuchadnezzar of Assyria, the Hebrew Daniel calls the Chaldean Magi by the same honorable names; he spends years in the study of their learning; and he accepts office among them as a *scientific fraternity*.[5]

[1] Exod. 7: 12; 1 Sam. 16: 23; 2 Kings 3: 15.

[2] Gen. 41: 8 et seq.; Ex. 7: 11 et seq.

[3] See the word "*character*," in Webster; also the Hebrew.

[4] The title *hakim*. Compare Hengstenberg's Egypt and the Books of Moses, chap. I., p. 29.

[5] Dan. 1: 4, 20; 2: 2, 48; 5: 11; also, Jer. 50: 35; Esther 1: 13.

The latter is a name also expressly applied to Solomon and Daniel.[1]

In the *third place*, a resort to such excitements of the nervous system for the purpose of gaining knowledge of the future, and of spiritual truth, is *condemned;* and upon two grounds. There is an *intellectual* reason, founded in the very nature of our mental organism. Living men do not and should not expect to receive communications from the dead.[2] To seek them is to waste time and energies that might be husbanded for a better purpose; and if responses be received, they are just like the excited fancies, the brilliant but deceptive imaginings and utterances, of a man inebriated.[3] Yet more, there is a *moral* and *religious* reason. To resort to such means for gaining any knowledge, is to slight the noble and ample powers of arriving at all needful truth, which our Creator has given us as sufficient for their purpose; and thus it is to dishonor him.[4] To trust to such means of *spiritual* knowledge, is to discard the established revelations which God has given to guide our souls to truth and duty here, and to heaven hereafter.[5] It is, in fine, to induce within ourselves such a derangement of the natural functions of both body and mind, such a disturbance of reason and sound judgment, and such error of feeling, thought and

[1] 1 Kings 2: 9; Ezek. 28 : 3. Josephus, who is authority on questions of *Jewish history*, mentions in accordance with the Scripture allusions Solomon's knowledge of magic; Ant. 8 : 2 : 5.

[2] Isa. 8 : 19.

[3] Deut. 18 : 12, 14; 1 Sam. 28 : 16; Hos. 4 : 11, 12.

[4] 1 Sam. 15 : 23; Lev. 19 : 23.

[5] Deut. 18 : 15; 1 Sam. 28 : 6; Isa. 8 : 20

action, as will fulfil the heathen maxim, "Whom the gods would destroy they first render insane;" for *death* temporal and spiritual is the lot of him who thus trusts.[1] For these reasons the statute is given, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live;"[2] the "witch" thus condemned being one who claims that the secret *natural* power she possesses is *supernatural*, and thus gains by false pretences an authority among men which only the laws of society and the laws of God can justly exert; while our fathers, in strange oversight of the very spirit of the Mosaic statute, made it applicable to one who denied all supernatural power, and never sought any such authority.

Most admirable and most satisfactory to a sincere mind, looking for truth, is the manner in which all these sources of unjustifiable knowledge are brought into contrast with the really supernatural in the Old Testament, and are made to establish its claims as a revelation from God. Skilled in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, Moses, empowered with real supernatural power, seems directed first to perform those exhibitions which he knew the wise men of Egypt could copy.[3] Thus leading them on to perform all the wonders which they by their wisdom could accomplish, Moses showed the limit of natural power; and he compelled them, thus committed, to acknowledge that limit, and to testify that the power with which *he* was gifted was *supernatural*.[4] Thus, moreover,

[1] 1 Chron. 10 : 13.
[2] See Josephus Ant., II., xiii., § 3.
[3] Ex. 22 : 18.
[4] Exod. 8 : 19.

Moses' miracles were proved to Pharaoh to be the working, not of one among many gods, not the power of a "God of the Hebrews" who had no control in Egypt; but they were shown to be the working of the "one living and true God," who made and ruled all the world, and controlled the elements, and ruled the souls of men, in Egypt as well as in Canaan.[1]

Moreover, as this peculiar testimony was given by the first, so was it by the last in the line of divinely empowered men, through whom the Old Testament records were given as an established revelation from God. Daniel, educated from childhood in Babylon, as Moses was in Egypt, being one of the learned class, known to be one of them, and eminent in all their wisdom, — Daniel is gifted with a *new* and *unheard-of* power.[2] By study of the workings of the human mind, by knowledge of the fact that *dreams* are but continuations of our *waking* thoughts, purposes and wishes, presented to the mind often during sleep in distorted images, and by observing that what a man thus is thinking of night and day he *will realize*, — by *natural wisdom* the Assyrian Magi might so interpret a dream that its result should accurately follow, and thus the event seem to be foretold, when it really followed as a natural consequence from the dreamer's state of mind.[3] But, Daniel, with added *supernatural* power, receives knowl-

[1] Hengstenberg's Egypt and the Books of Moses, transl. by Robbins, chap. II., pp. 96—100.

[2] Dan. 1 : 4, 20; 2 : 48; 5 : 11, 12; compare 2 : 28, 47.

[3] See Let. Eighth, pp. 88, 89.

edge of the *forgotten* dream,[1] as well as of the interpretation. And thus even the Magi themselves acknowledge that Daniel has a power belonging "unto the gods only whose dwelling is not in the flesh;" a power no one of their order ever possessed.

What is thus seen to be established in reference to the first and the last of the Old Testament writers (that they had fully mastered all natural powers, and then received an added supernatural endowment), may be equally attested of all the sacred penmen intervening. In a living, speaking picture, one of a thousand like occurrences of that day, a writer[2] in the Old Testament has been directed to embody the facts, and the lessons from those facts, which in all ages should give Heaven-sent instruction to men as to the mysteries of the spiritual medium. At dead of night, a man of tall, gigantic form, muffled in his robe and evidently seeking disguise, is seen entering the little village of Endor, and approaching the door of a "medium." The law of God, given by Moses, strictly forbade the practice of her art; and the statute, often a dead letter, had been rigidly enforced by Saul, the then King of Israel. He "had put away those that had familiar spirits and the wizards out of the land." It was not the civil law, however, that made that muffled man seek disguise. There is something always in the heart of man which makes him feel, when resorting to such sources of secret knowledge, that he is engaged in a business justly regarded by intelligent men as a mark of superstitious

[1] Compare Dan. 1: 20; 2: 4, with Dan. 2: 11, 28, 47.

[2] 1 Sam. 28: 3—20.

weakness, if it be not criminal. There was a conscious shame which made the disguised man wish to hide his weakness from man, and a troubled conscience which took away his peace with God. A great crisis, a desperate battle on the morrow, was pending; and his agitated mind cherished the unhallowed longing to foreknow the event. There were then three divine modes of giving revelations to men; three authorized methods given by God for gaining knowledge from the other world; and it was by copying these that unholy art gained its power. These were through dreams, and through prophets, and through Urim, the emblem of revelation. But all these the anxious man had sought, and had received no response. It was as manifest that it was not the divine will to gratify his curiosity, as it is when now neither in nature, nor in our own consciousness, nor in the revealed word of God, can we find all we crave to know. Agitated in spirit, cherishing in heart "rebellion like the sin of witchcraft" because he could learn no more, the proud yet pusillanimous warrior was stealing now at dead of night, like many another, to consult the medium of the village. A knock is heard at her low door; and, as it turns on its hinges in the dim light, a female form is seen suspiciously approaching. "I pray thee," breaks on her ear from the muffled warrior, "divine unto me by the familiar spirit, and bring me him up whom I shall name unto thee." She hesitates, and expresses her fears. "Behold," says she, "thou knowest what Saul hath done; how he hath cut off them that have familiar spirits out of the land."

Assured, however, of safety, she begins her incantations. She was mistress of the art *gastromantia*,[1] a ventriloquist; one of a "learned" class,[2] who really foretold at times accurately future events.[3] Like her fellows of the same art, we may imagine her bringing forth her water-vase, and burning her incense; thus, through nervous excitement, really expecting to see reported the thought, the secret wish, of her inquirer; as now, through the nervous principle or spiritual medium, it seems to be. But, suddenly, — since it is Saul, the King of Israel himself, that is there as inquirer, and since the occasion justifies such an interposition, — to the terror of the diviner herself, not an image of the excited fancy, but a real form arises; an "old man covered with a mantle" comes up! God has seen fit to send Samuel himself in bodily form, with a real mantle that can be seized hold upon, to rebuke the impiety, the irreverent curiosity, of him who thus sought knowledge through the undue excitement of the nervous principle, through the diseased manifestation of the spiritual medium.[4] Forth goes that

[1] See the Hebrew, and the Greek of the Septuagint version; also, Josephus and others.

[2] Josephus' Antiquities, Book VI., chap. xiv., § 4.

[3] Rabbi Salomo, on Deut. 18 : 11, says, "This person, like the ventriloquist, so called at Athens, prophesied *true* things through a demon having possession of him." Quoted by Wetstein, on Matt. 17 : 15.

[4] This was the view of the ancient Jews; see in the Apocrypha Ecclesiasticus 46: 20. It is also the view of Sir Walter Scott, whose thorough study of the history of this entire subject certainly entitles his opinion to have weight. See Letters on Demonology

mighty monarch as we should expect such an one to go; as must all those who daily and nightly allow themselves to suffer such a deranging excitement. Reason is bedimmed, and judgment wavers in its enthroned seat; his nerves are unstrung, and there is no steadiness in his purpose, and no firmness in his action. He is, like hundreds who are following him, a lost man; and speedily he rushes upon his self-prepared ruin, and falls by his own suicidal hand.

In this distant age, in this remote land, it is impossible, Charles, that we should fully enter into the spirit of this divinely drawn picture. Could we carry our minds back to ancient times, could we transport ourselves, for instance, to the land of Egypt, and live there, as it were, with Clement of Alexandria, and the men of his time, far more deeply should we feel the contrast between all these varied wonders of the spiritual medium alluded to in the Old Testament, and the truly supernatural, by which God confirmed his ancient revelation as divine. Turn to the pages of that strong-minded, clear-headed father, who opened to Champollion's mind the system of hieroglyphic writing.[1] Follow him through his description of the mysteries of Egypt, and the wondrous science of India and Egypt, which lay at the basis of those mysteries.[2] Mark how, living as he did in the

and Witchcraft. New York, 1830; Harper's Fam. Lib., vol. XI., Letter III., pp. 58—62.

[1] Clementini Alexandrini Opera, Graece et Latine, Lugduni Batavorum. 1616. Stromatum, Lib. v., p. 405.

[2] Ibid, Admonitio ad Gentes, pp. 7, 8; and Stromatum, Lib. VI., pp. 456, 457.

day when the simple facts of the gospel of Christ were fast throwing into shade all the venerable forms of Egyptian as well as Grecian science and philosophy, and were winning away the most gifted youth from the religion of their fathers, the Christian scholar boldly appeals to the nations to confess that entirely unlike to all human wisdom are the established facts of the Scriptures of revelation; and that the inspiration which gave the Old and New Testaments is not to be compared with that of the Egyptian prophet, and of the Greek Pythoness.[1] Such a man, and such men, Charles, could appreciate what we are so indistinctly impressed with. In the very age when, in the same land where knowledge of the powers in human nature had reached a degree of culture such as it never since has surpassed, the writers of these Sacred Scriptures were proved, before the learned as well as the ignorant, to be gifted with an entirely distinct, a peculiar, a supernatural power.

Surely, then, our faith rests on a rock "higher than we," on "the Rock of Ages;" for the men of all on earth most able and most anxious to assert the contrary were forced to confess, "Their rock is not as our rock." When the wise men of ancient Egypt and Assyria, who witnessed them, testify to the supernatural power of Moses, Daniel, and the other prophets, it would be doing the greatest violence to my mental nature to force it into disbelief. I will not do it; but I will try to cherish such a spirit of love for the truth, whatever it may

[1] Clementini Alexandrini Opera, Admonitio ad Gentes, pp. 7, 8; and Stromatum, Lib. I., p. 245.

be, that when I read the Old Testament, attested through century after century to be a revelation from God, I shall not rashly adjudge as human that which the greatest minds of earth have known to be divine.

Letter Eleventh.

THE WONDERS OF THE SPIRITUAL MEDIUM AMONG THE GREEKS AND ROMANS, COMPARED WITH AND CONFIRMING THE MIRACLES AND INSPIRATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

"If I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast them out?" "The evil spirit said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are ye?" "And many that believed came and confessed, and showed their deeds. Many of them also that used curious arts brought their books together and burned them." — Luke 11: 19; Acts 19: 15, 18, 19.

"If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not; but if I do, believe the works." "No man knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son shall reveal him." "What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so knoweth no man the things of God but the Spirit of God. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit." — John 10: 37, 38; Matt. 11: 27; 1 Cor. 2: 10, 11.

Christian School in Egypt. — Greek Youth won. — Supernatural Revelation needed. — Greek and Roman View. — "Desire of all Nations." — Revelation not from Reason. — Not from the Spiritual Medium. — Jewish Art in Christ's Day. — Jewish Views of Christ's Miracles. — Mysterious Arts of Paul's Day. — Compared with Christ's Miracles. — Compared with Paul's Miracles. — Evil Spirits. — Possessions only in Christ's Day. — Good Angels. — No Revelation from them. — Miracles prove Inspiration. — The Ancients convinced. — All Ages convinced.

My Dear Charles:

One day about one hundred years after the birth of Jesus Christ, a young man was walking alone, in deep thought, along the sandy beach near Alexandria, in

Egypt. Deeply read in the philosophy of his time, he had passed through the various Grecian schools of the Stoics, of Aristotle and of Plato. In none of them all had he found anything to satisfy a soul seeking truth. In a distant land he had heard of the famed Christian school of Alexandria, which was taking precedence of all the time-honored colleges of Egypt, and drawing the best youth from all the attractions of the Museum and the Libraries of the Ptolemies. Voyaging thither, and landing in the literary emporium of that day, the young man for a time kept aloof from the school he had sought, not making himself known, but forming an outside judgment ere he should commit himself. It was at this juncture he was rambling, lonely, unknown and pensive, on the sea-shore. An old man, also walking there, passed him, drew near and saluted him. Soon they were in close and earnest converse; and, as they went over together the grand features of the philosophies of their day, one could see that they were of kindred spirit and of like experience, and that souls made for communion were met. These themes exhausted, and their mutual difficulties and dissatisfaction fully exchanged, the old man, with a kindling eye and in glowing eloquence, began to speak of another theme,—of the "truth as it is in Jesus." The new doctrine chained the young man's ear, won his heart, and made him a disciple; and, after a life of masterly literary toil, and of devoted Christian labor, he penned one of the most manly appeals which ever reached the eye of a Roman emperor or of the world, proving the supe-

riority of the Christian to every other religious system, and Justin the Martyr sealed his testimony with his life. Charles, we live in an age when men reason for themselves, and everything is questioned and discussed. But nothing can exceed the folly of supposing that we have got beyond generations before us; that we have examined more thoroughly, reasoned more profoundly, or can find eternal sure truth anywhere else than the Grecian and Roman world found and embraced it. The New Testament Scriptures are alone the eternal truth of God, revealed for our guidance.

Turning, then, to the records of the New Testament, let us seek what it was that convinced Grecian and Roman scholars, familiar with the Egyptian mysteries. And, while we trace out its allusions to the wondrous manifestations of the spiritual medium, remember we that they were penned in the Ciceronian age of Grecian wisdom and of Roman learning, and that they were published to the world in the day when the largest experience of those mysteries had been gathered from the gleanings of every age and land, and when the matured philosophy of their development had been most carefully sought out. We may then be prepared to appreciate, in the contrast, the really supernatural in the *miraculous facts* here recorded, and in the *divine inspiration* by which the spiritual truths here embodied were revealed.

Nothing is more manifest than this, that all positive knowledge of the spiritual world, of God and of our future existence, of the preparation we need for that existence and of the means of securing that preparation,

— all this knowledge must be gained, if gained at all, from sources outside of ourselves, from *supernatural* revelations. All our personal sources of knowledge are the observation of material things by the senses, and the intuitions or deductions of our reason as to spiritual truth; and while our observation cannot reach beyond our present existence, our reason can only suggest *principles;* it can apprehend no positive fact as to our future spiritual condition. Of this men without the Bible, such as Cicero and Plato,[1] have been as thoroughly convinced as we can be.

Moreover, such a revelation we *need;* it is not to us a matter of no importance whether we have it or not. Our spirits are bound to another world; and for that world they are not prepared. For, just as truly as our bodily frames are disordered, and no human art or power can restore them so that this disorder shall not increase and end in utter decay, so our spirits are disordered, unfitted to mingle happily even with our own fellow-men, and much less with pure angels and a holy God. Of this, too, the poets and philosophers of Greece and Rome[2] spoke as clearly as did Paul the apostle of Christ; feeling it as really, if not as deeply, as does he who believes in the Bible picture. They looked, therefore, for a supernatural revelation from the Creator and Father of our spirits.[3]

[1] See Lectures on Christian Theology, by G. C. Knapp, D.D., translated from the German by Leonard Woods, Jun., D.D. Art. I., sect. 9; citations from ancients.

[2] Knapp's Theology, Art. IX., sect. 74; citations.

[3] Virgil's Pollio, Eclog. IV.; Knapp's Theology, Art. X., sect. 89.

How men have longed for, and how they have in all ages sought such revelations, we have seen. As Plato said, the magic of Zoroaster, of Socrates, and of other seekers of truth, was nothing else than a means of knowing God.[1] But the oracles at length ceased to be trusted, and ceased to respond; and it was as Plutarch said, because they were abused for trifling purposes, and perverted from their higher end. As Milton, in his rare study of the ancients, truthfully has pictured in his sublime "Christmas Hymn," on the night when Christ was born the Lybian oracle of Ammon, the Egyptian prophet, the Syrian deities, the shrines of Greece and the genius of Rome, had all alike ceased to give responses:

"The oracles are dumb;
No voice or hideous hum
Runs through the arched roof in words deceiving.
Apollo from his shrine
Can no more divine,
With hollow shriek the steep of Delphos leaving.
No nightly trance or breathed spell
Inspires the pale-eyed priests from the prophetic cell."

But now one from the other world was sent to give to men sure knowledge of God and of the spirit world. The necessity of human nature, perceived and spoken of by a Hebrew writer as early as the days of Zoroaster,[2]

[1] See Let. Sixth, p. 61.

[2] Haggai 2: 7. The age of Zoroaster is generally fixed between 589 and 519 B. C. Haggai prophesied in the reign of Darius Hystaspis, which began 521 B. C. The two men lived in the same land, as well as in the same age.

whom Pliny called the originator of magic, was now to be met. "The Desire of all Nations" came; and as Columbus, on his return from a New World, could alone give sure knowledge as to what before had been conjectured, so He who alone "came down from heaven" could "bear witness to the truth." He lived and taught; he died, arose, and ascended to heaven, leaving behind men empowered to write out his revelation for the world.

Opening these their records, thus divinely given, we see confirmed what before had been impressed on the conviction of men. Observation and consciousness never can give positive knowledge of spiritual truth. He who made the world was in the world; but the world knew him not. No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and he hath declared him.[1] By observation, the Greek, from the creation, from the things made, perceived God's eternal power and personal deity; and reason, conscience, taught him in principle the law of God, his disobedience to it, and his just condemnation.[2] But, the world by wisdom, in fact, knew not God, in his real character, which was seen in Christ crucified; they knew not the means he had provided for the spirit's ransom and renovation, through the mediation of his Son; a fact that could not be made known, except by

[1] John 1 : 1—18.
[2] Rom. 1 : 20, 32, and 2 : 14, 15.

the hearing of the ear, through the voice or pen of a herald.[1]

Moreover, not through any mysterious *development of the spiritual medium* were revelations to be obtained. The plain, practical New Testament writers fail not to allude to the wonderful manifestations seen in their day, and to the popular impression in reference to them, not shunning to bring them into comparison with the miracles of Christ and their own inspiration.

Jesus one day alluded to the mysterious arts by which Jewish exorcists cast out devils. Josephus[2] thus describes a scene of that day, of which he was a personal eye-witness. Speaking of Solomon, he says, "God also enabled him to learn that skill which expels demons, which is a science useful and sanative to man. He composed such incantations, also, by which distempers are alleviated. And he left behind him the manner of using such exorcisms, by which they drive away demons, so that they never return; and this method of cure is of great force unto this day, for I have seen a certain man of my own country, whose name was Eleazar, releasing people that were demoniacal, in presence of Vespasian, and his sons, and his captains, and the whole multitude of his soldiers. The manner of the cure was this: he put a ring that had a root of the sort spoken of by Solomon to the nostrils of the demoniac, after which he drew out the demon through his

[1] 1 Cor. 1 : 21, 24; 2 : 8, 10; and Rom. 10 : 14.

[2] Josephus' Antiquities, Book VIII., chap. II., sect. 5.

nostrils; and when the man fell down immediately, he adjured him to return into him no more, making still mention of Solomon, and reciting the incantations he composed. And when Eleazar would persuade and demonstrate to the spectators that he had such a power, he set a little way off a cup or basin full of water, and commanded the demon, as he went out of the man, to overturn it, and thereby to let the spectators know that he had left the man; and when this was done the skill and wisdom of Solomon was shown very manifestly." Here the facts, the relief of the sufferer, and the moving of the metallic basin, are the same as seen in all ages, and in all lands from India to our shores.[1] The artificial means, the use of the metallic ring, of the exhilarating or stupefying drug, and of the mesmeric passes to bring the disease from the head, are the same with those seen in the Roman and Grecian writers, on the ancient monuments of Egypt, and in the practice of modern India.[2] The reference of the cure to an art dignified with the authority of Solomon shows that there was a science behind; and the reference of the disease to demoniacal agency shows the popular belief, behind which there was also a scientific truth. Now, with such scenes, Matthew, a resident in Palestine, and Luke, an intelligent physician, inquiring as to the facts in Christ's history, knew their readers were familiar; and they allude to them to confirm by the contrast the really supernatural in Christ's miracles. With an

[1] See Let. Tenth, p. 98. [2] Ibid, pp. 107—109.

equal frankness and confidence, the different opinions entertained by those who witnessed them, as to Christ's wonderful works, are stated. When he casts out demons, some say "he does it by Beelzebub;" and when the voice from heaven addresses him, the men of impressible nervous organism say, "An angel spake to him!" while the phlegmatic hearers sneeringly respond, "It only thundered."[1]

In the slightly later times of the apostles of Christ, the same intelligent notice of the mysterious manifestations of that day is taken. The educated and candid Luke, as a physician specially qualified to judge, always mentions incidents of this kind. Simon, the sorcerer, for a long time had perfectly fascinated the people of Samaria by his arts; and they truly believed him to be the "great power of God."[2] The damsel of Philippi truly possessed the spirit of a Delphic "Pythoness," and could "divine." With respectful mention the "curious arts," and the "books"[3] treating on those arts, are alluded to. Without fear that it shall detract from Paul's real inspiration, Luke records the remark of the Pharisees, indicating their opinion about the apostle, "If a spirit or an angel has spoken to him, let us not fight against God."[4]

Thus noticing these sources through which supernatural knowledge was sought, the New Testament writers show the total unlikeness, the entire superiority,

[1] Matt. 12 : 24; John 12 : 29.
[2] Acts 8 : 9, 10.
[3] Acts 19 : 19.
[4] Acts 23 : 9.

of the testimonials they brought. The Jewish exorcist, like the ancient and modern practitioners of like art in every land and age, to our time, may relieve certain affections of the body, by a peculiar power exerted over the nervous system of the sufferer. But Christ, by a touch, and often by a word at a distance, healed a hemorrhage of twelve years' continuance, a palsy of thirty-eight years' duration, and leprosy, the incurable disease; while he also gave speech to the dumb, hearing to the deaf, sight to the blind, and "a right mind" to the lunatic.[1] The Hindoo devotee may throw himself into a trance,[2] from which, after many days, he may be revived. But Christ, casually entering after a day's journey a little village, met the corpse of a young man whom his friends were carrying to the grave; and, touching the bier, he restored him.[3] When in a distant region beyond the Jordan, he heard of the severe illness of a poor man living near Jerusalem; and, waiting until he had expired and had lain in the grave till corruption began, at a distance he first foretold that the dead should be raised, and then, coming and standing at the tomb amid a cavilling multitude, said "Come forth," and the dead came forth.[4] Finally, Jesus himself, after hanging nailed to the cross three hours, after a soldier had thrust his spear into his vitals, so that not

[1] Matt. 9 : 20; John 5 : 5; Luke 5 : 12; compare 2 Kings 5 : 7; Luke 7 : 22, and 8 : 35.

[2] See Let. Ninth, p. 96.

[3] Luke 7 : 11—15.

[4] John 11 : 1—44.

only blood, but also the fluids of the vital organs, poured forth, and after lying in the grave until the third day, — Jesus himself, without another's aid, arose from the tomb.[1]

Equally striking is the truly supernatural in the apostles' miracles; into contrast with which all, and more than, the arts we wonder at were brought, and were acknowledged to be but vain artifice. When Simon, the Magian, first saw the miracles of the apostles, he was overwhelmed with astonishment; while, moreover, his cupidity yet remaining, he sought to purchase the power as a new art.[2] From the divining damsel the simple word of Paul expelled the spirit which actuated her, and made her Christ's meek follower.[3] Luke, looking on with a physician's practised eye, saw handkerchiefs and aprons brought from Paul effect the cure of diseases; and when the vagabond Jewish exorcists attempted to copy these healings, and the possessed man leaped madly upon the pretenders, such fear and conviction seized on the minds of the practisers of those arts, that "many confessed, and showed their deeds, and brought their books on the curious arts and burned them;" magnifying thus the name of the Lord Jesus.[4]

Thus setting forth the deceptive, the mere art based on natural principles, and teaching that a resort to these was not to be trusted, but to be shunned, the New Tes-

[1] Matt. 27 : 45; John 19 : 34, 35, and John 10 : 18.
[2] Acts 8 : 13, 19.
[3] Acts 16 : 18.
[4] Acts 19 : 11—19.

tament writers go yet further. They reveal most clearly and consistently the nature of *evil* and *good spirits*, the connection they have with us, and the source whence we should look for a revelation from God.

As to *evil spirits*, we are assured of their existence; what had been impressed on the belief of all mankind, and clearly taught in the Old Testament from the fall of Adam, being clearly exemplified. As an anomaly in the whole world's past and future history, just as much a feature of that age and of that little land as was the life of the Son of God himself, in Christ's day and in the country where he moved, actual bodily possessions with demons occurred. They did not exist, apparently, in ages before. The Old Testament mentions no instance; the case of Saul being entirely different from the New Testament possessions.[1] Josephus mentions them in no age but that immediately preceding his own, except in the case of Saul, and in allusion to Solomon; where, evidently, the peculiarity of his own day is transferred to former periods, or the Greek and Roman view of demons already considered is given.[2] They existed not after Christ's day. Origen, in his commentary on Matt. 17th, writing less than two hundred years after Christ, remarks that the physicians of

[1] 1 Sam. 16 : 14—23; 18 : 10—12.

[2] Josephus' Antiq., Book VI., chap. xi., sects. 2, 3, and Book VIII., chap. ii., sect. 5. Also, Wars, Book VII., chap. vi., sect. 3; where the nature of demoniacal possession, and the plant used by the exorcist in removing it, are described.

his day did not believe there were such possessions.[1] Moreover, though the gospels of Jesus are full of plain instances, and the word "demon" in Christ's life refers to evil spirits, yet mention of demoniacal possessions, even in the Acts of the Apostles, begins to fade away and to be lost, and the word is there applied oftener, in the Grecian sense, to demigods, and supposed revelations derived through them; while, in the epistles, the only influence evil spirits are intimated to have over men, the only power which we are to regard them as possessing, and against which we are to guard, is a spiritual influence.[2] For a few years permitted to possess the bodies of men, during the same years and in the same land where the Son of God was passing his human existence, permitted thus at that juncture to appear, that the power of man's Saviour might be manifest in overcoming the power of man's spiritual destroyer, the occasion for such possessions having passed by, they too, with other influences of a miraculous nature, passed away. The claim to the possession of such a power, sought for in themselves and others by crafty men, who would employ a diseased natural agency for gain, as seen in Simon and the damsel at Philippi, is always condemned by the apostles, and abandoned by those who became Christians.[3] James seems to classify, and that as mental philosophers in all ages have, the sources whence knowledge of the spir-

[1] Quoted in Knapp's Theology, § 65.

[2] See the references in Robinson's New Test. Greek Lexicon.

[3] Acts 8 : 20; 16 : 19, and 19 : 18, 19.

itual world is sought; mentioning that derived through the physical senses, that through the mental powers, and, lastly, that sought through the intermediate agency of the Grecian demon, or the spiritual medium; and all these he condemns.[1] No one can read attentively the New Testament view of evil spirits, without being satisfied that, while they plainly warn us against an evil influence on our moral and religious nature from such beings, they discard the idea of any power over man's physical and mental nature permanently exerted by them.

Equally clearly are the existence and office of *good angels* set forth. Since our little world is thickly peopled, why should not other larger worlds be? If our spirits live separate from the flesh in another world, why should not other spirits be there also? Christ taught, in opposition to the Sadducees, that there are angels and spirits; and that in the resurrection human souls are like the angels.[2] He taught that angels are cognizant of and interested in man and his affairs on earth; joy spreading throughout their hosts over one sinner that repents.[3] The angels, moreover, Christ and his apostles taught, exert an influence on man, and on his behalf. The angels of one who serves God always behold the face of our Father in heaven; they are ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them that are the heirs of salvation; they come as welcoming messengers to meet the spirit parting from its abode on earth, and

[1] James 3 : 15. [2] Luke 20 : 36—38. [3] Luke 16 : 1—10.

they bear it to the company of others gathered from among men.[1] Here, however, ceases their influence over us; it is purely a spiritual influence wrought on our spirits. Before Christ's coming angels did bring messages to man; appearing to the patriarchs, mediating between God and man when the Law was given, and announcing Christ's birth before his ministry. But, since Christ has come to teach men, and his perfected revelation has been given, angels are no more thus employed; no revelation since Christ's coming have they brought.[2] Moreover, no spirit of man that has left this earth, however much that spirit may sympathize with the living, and by indirect influences aid them, — no soul will be allowed to return with a message from the spiritual world to his friends on earth.[3]

Finally, most clearly and satisfactorily to a sincere mind is the mode and the testimony of God's giving this his revelation presented. It seems to be this. As we have seen, we need a revelation to teach us the truth as to God, our future state, and the preparation meet for it. Such a revelation must come from a supernatural source, and only by supernatural testimonials can we know that it is from God. Of two kinds of power only, now, have we any knowledge; power over matter, which

[1] Matt. 18 : 10; Heb. 1 : 14; Luke 16 : 22.

[2] Gen. 19 : 1, &c.; Mat. 1 : 20; 2 : 13; Luke 2 : 10; Acts 7 : 53; Gal 3 : 19; Heb. 2 : 2. Also Heb. 2 : 3—5, where the "Christian dispensation" is said to be committed, after Christ, not to angels, but to men. See Stuart, on the passage.

[3] Luke 16 : 31.

we can see and know, and power over spirit, which we cannot see, and of which we cannot directly be assured. Only by showing supernatural power over things seen, can any man convince another that he has supernatural power in reference to things unseen. Hence Christ wrought miracles. To prove his divine power, he did what no man can perform; while, at the same time, to show his divine love to man, he made all his mighty works testify of that love. He healed incurable disease, "going about doing good," but not overturning mountains and casting them into the sea; and this he did, not to excite wonder, not even primarily to relieve bodily suffering, but to prove that he had power to forgive sins and save the soul.[1] To his disciples he gave the same supernatural power in things seen, that they might be believed when they claimed supernatural knowledge of things unseen.[2] They wrote histories of their own and of Christ's miracles, whose truth no one in their age disputed, although their narratives were published when knowledge of the mysteries of spiritual power was most extensive, and the philosophy of that power was best understood. In those records they declare that they received directly from Christ and from God a supernatural knowledge of spiritual truth to communicate to man; their seen power in healing the bodies of men being given simply to prove this correspondent and only really important power to guide

[1] Matt. 9 : 6.

[2] John 14 : 12, 26; 15 : 24—27; Acts 3 : 12.

and bless the spirits of men.[1] In describing the nature of this power, they speak of it as entirely unlike any possessed by men through the soul's own mysterious energies. It may be a fact that when one person has allowed her nervous energy to be controlled by another of stronger nerve, and when a second allows his thought to be echoed through that other, the secret knowledge of that second person may be reported. But this is nothing more nor less than my thought uttered by my own volition, through another to another. There is no power on earth by which another can become possessed of my secret thought, unless I willingly reveal it through my lips, or my pen; or through the telegraphic rapping, writing or speaking, of the spiritual medium; or through some other *natural* power, of which I am now unconscious. Hence, says an apostle, a man of large learning and wide experience in mysteries like those of our time, "What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him?" No earthly human power can reach a single thought in another's spirit, unless he himself reveal it. "Even so," — must it not be thus? — "the things of God knoweth no man, but the spirit of God." And thus, as Jesus said, "no man knoweth the Father, save the Son," who alone has been in heaven, and "has come down from heaven; and he to whom the Son shall reveal him." So Paul argues, "If any man ever knows the deep things of God, God must

[1] Gal. 1 : 11, 12; 1 Cor. 14 : 37; 2 Cor. 2 : 17; 1 Thess. 2 : 13; 4 : 8; 2 Pet. 1 : 21; 1 John 4 : 6.

by his Spirit reveal them unto us;" communicating with us in *words*, as one man communicates his knowledge to another.[1]

And now, Charles, I would that we could see and feel the force of these conclusions, as whole nations and men of the ablest minds have felt them. Forth went these testimonials of the apostles' power in their day, and the intellect of all Greece and Rome was enchained by them. The schools of the Ptolemies at Alexandria, where was gathered all the accumulated learning of Egypt, India, Greece and Rome combined, were deserted by the young men, who thronged to the Christian school there established in the century immediately after Christ.[2] The noblest genius of that age embraced the Christian faith, beholding the heaven-wide difference between it and all that philosophy had before taught; so that in three centuries the Roman world bowed to and acknowledged the Sacred Scriptures as the only divinely given revelation. Thus the able Tertullian, thoroughly acquainted with what he attempted, draws the contrast, in his heroic appeal to the Roman emperor; referring to the Grecian notion of the demon, "one of whom Socrates said that he had from childhood attending him, and which he always consulted before he undertook anything of moment;" declaring that by this demon (or spir-

[1] 1 Cor. 2: 10—13.

[2] Neander's Planting and Training of the Christian Church, Book II., and Book III., chap. VI.; also, Neander's History of the Church in the First Three Centuries, sect. 1st (A); especially his allusions to the Goetae.

itual agent) "magicians perform all their amazing feats, calling up ghosts and departed spirits from the shades," by it "they are able to make stools and *tables* prophesy," and by it they gain such mysterious knowledge that "Castor and Pollux at Rome announced the victory of Perseus, King of Macedon, the same day it was fought;" and yet, allowing all this, he appeals, in that age when the facts were not forgotten but inscribed in public records now unknown, — he appeals to the *truly supernatural* in Christ's miracles, by the side of which all this was jugglery and artifice.[1] Ah, Charles, this subject has been thoroughly canvassed, ages ago; and men of larger minds than we have been convinced. Time would fail to picture single instances, in each succeeding age, of minds like that of Grotius; who, after studying the philosophy and moral precepts of every age and land, sat down, after the work was finished, to compare the Sacred Scriptures with the Shasters and the Koran of the East, with the oracles of Greece, and with the mysteries of spiritual power everywhere seen; and then pointed out, for minds that should come after, the celestial superiority of the established word of God. Let us, Charles, bring our minds into contact with such leading spirits of our race, and we may catch, too, something of their intelligent faith.

[1] Tertullian's Apology, sects. 31—34, 47, 56.

Letter Twelfth.

THE PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL DANGERS AND PENALTIES OF THE ABUSE OF THE SPIRITUAL MEDIUM.

"Mysticism despairs of the regular processes of science." — *Cousin.*

"Tune quaesieres, scire nefas, quem mihi, quem tibi
Finem Di dederint, Leuconoe; nec Babylonios
Tentaris numeros. Ut melius, quidquid erit, pati!" — *Horace.*

[You should not seek to know, for it is wrong to inquire, what destiny for me, what for thee, the gods have appointed, Leuconoe; nor should you try to learn your fortune from Babylonian astrology. How much better, whatever may be our lot, to endure it!]

"Young people would do wisely now to lay aside all their foolish books, their trifling ballads, and all romantic accounts of dreams and trances, senseless palmistry and groundless astrology. A little spark will kindle a great fire." — *Turrell in Witchcraft Times.*

"Evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, *deceiving* and *being* deceived." — *Paul on erring Religious Teachers.*

What Use. — Experience shows. — Just Views prevailing. — Dangerous Experimenting. — Physical and Moral Danger. — Nervous Epidemics. — Excitement on Spiritual Themes. — Cool Men cannot control it. — Avoid Exciting Causes. — Why Observers disagree. — Both Right, though differing. — Science a Growth of Ages. — Trained Men for the Risk. — Religious Experimenting. — Warning from the Past. — "Sure word of Prophecy." — No "Broken Cistern."

My Dear Charles:

Do you ask now, "Of what practical use is it for us to be brought thus to the conclusion that all these manifestations, supposed to be spiritual, are really natural, the working of an agent intermediate between mind and matter?" Look out for the next breeze that

blows; beware of the clouds gathering! The trembling of Brattle, and the terrors that invested old Salem, may be near. We *may* see that experience will teach us the results are of great moment.

It is dangerous to *experiment* with our own vital organism; especially with our nervous energy. The whole history of similar developments in distant ages and nations seems to indicate that these manifestations are the working of our nervous organism. The whole process of their excitement, the character of the persons affected, the mode of inducing the influence by forming a circle of positives and negatives, the sitting in fixed abstraction, during which the generated nervous influence must accumulate in the system, as in an isolated Leyden jar, the correspondence of the character of the responses given to the inquiries made, the whole process of the excitement, confirms the conviction that the agent is the nervous principle. Most of all, the effect of this influence on the persons practising it is precisely that of other modes of nervous excitement. The poet, the orator, writing and speaking under a strong self-aroused enthusiasm, the raving Sibyl, the mesmerizer, the practiser of the spiritual rappings, all alike find a nervous exhaustion to be the result.

Even since these letters to you were commenced, Charles, other minds, studying the mysteries which are now beginning to produce an alarming and Salem-like excitement in our community, have been tending to the same track of thought which we have been pursuing. There has just come from the press, for instance, a work

on the "Philosophy of Mysterious Agents."[1] Though differing in many vital points from this author, we may, with Cicero, rejoice when extreme theories meet in their practical conclusions. The justness of our main position, that a *possible* cause, shown by history to be conformed to universal facts, is a practical proof that these manifestations are *natural*, — this position is confirmed from Herschel, who says that "the detection of a *possible* cause must lead" either to "a real cause" or to "an abstract law of nature."[2] That these mysterious manifestations are "facts," that the experience of them depends in part on one's nervous "organism," and that the agent through which they are produced is "not electricity," but like it in some of its modes of action, are all intimated.[3] The cases cited, though all of the present day, are selected from those examined in France, Germany and elsewhere, by scientific men; and they are all in harmony with the extended history which it has been our chief aim to trace. They are manifestly the undue, the dangerous excitement of our "nervous principle."

Now, Charles, it is dangerous to experiment thus with our nervous principle. It was placed within us by the Creator to be the steady, constant, and mighty, but

[1] Philosophy of Mysterious Agents, Human and Mundane; or, the Dynamic Laws and Relations of Man, embracing the Natural Philosophy of Phenomena styled "Spiritual Manifestations." By E. C. Rogers. In five parts. No. I. Boston, 1852.

[2] Ibid, § 11. See Discourse on the Study of Natural Philosophy, by Sir J. F. W. Herschel, § 162. See also Letter Third.

[3] Ibid, §§ 54, 57, 63—65.

perfectly controllable mover of the body, which is now the mind's machinery. If I use it carefully, never overcharging the delicate organs in which it is generated, and by which it is conducted through my frame, all will last and keep time like clock-work. Let me allow myself to excite this influence till it overflows and escapes from my fingers, or other organs, in snaps, like electricity from the bands of a factory-wheel, or till it sets my arm to quivering in ungovernable spasms, and I shall find that I might as safely try the experiment of overheating and over-straining a steam-boiler. Mark the invariable result of any undue mental excitement; and especially of a persevering attendance on the circles now so common in our community. On first entering no impression is made upon us. Soon, however, our nervous organism begins to feel the general impulse. There is a magnetic crawling and creeping sensation in the larger muscles, as of the arm; till it increases as we become more impressed. As we daily come in to join the circle, the influence is not felt till we have waited for its generation; and then, every time, more readily and more powerfully is it excited; till raps echo for us, and the table moves at our will. And now the confirmed "medium" cannot rid himself of the influence when away from the circle. He is nervous. All his senses being unnaturally acute, he naturally and necessarily hears strange sounds, sees strange sights, and feels strange sensations. His mind being disturbed in its calm working, he cannot fix his thoughts on his business, and he is all unsettled. His moral affections soon feel the influ-

ence. In the circle intent on spiritual manifestations, religion was all his theme; but at home he speaks hastily, often harshly; he feels conscious that the ties of his attachment to those who should be most dear to him are weakening; and he finds his impressions of duty to his family and friends and neighbors growing blunted and dimmed. Finally, his religious nature feels the searing blight; his faith is all afloat, rocking and tossing; the anchor of his hope is broken off at the flukes; and, driven starless and havenless by every wind of doctrine, even the white wings of his Christian charity, which once bore him to every chamber of suffering, are now riven as by a pestilential gale. Ere he is aware, he is *lost*. You would be surprised, Charles, to see how the most accurate students of the human mind, even the Arabian philosophers, have described the dangerous influence arising from these causes; ranking it as a diseased mental bias, as much to be guarded against as a tendency to pulmonary consumption.[1] I would sooner experiment with my digestive organs, or my blood-vessels, than with my nervous principle; for, the body's derangement is less fearful than that of the mind. I beg of you, Charles, think of this, if you have yielded to craving curiosity in following up these experiments. Be wise before it is too late.

But, what is far more important, as much so as society is more important than an individual, remember, Charles, that all these excitements are *epidemics*.

[1] See "Akhlak-i-Jalaly," transl. from the Persian of the Fakir Jany Muhammad Asaad, by W. F. Thompson. London.

Wide-spread excitements of a nervous nature go and come in waves, ebbing and flowing like the tide, swelling with every breeze, and rolling on till they dash and break in terrific ruin. Using the fearful figure of the pestilence, such men as Virgil and Tertullian describe the sweep of deranging excitements in their day. Mental disease, like any contagious disease, prevails when the whole atmosphere and the general condition of the individual system is prepared for it. A whole community, like that of Paris in the days of Robespierre, may be infected with over mental excitement bordering on mental derangement. Especially is this true of that species of nervous excitement which leads to an oversight of the link uniting matter and spirit, and to a conviction that the natural is supernatural. As in the case of the Salem witchcraft, and a thousand similar scenes in other lands and ages, there is a *reality* in some of these manifestations which startles observing and intelligent men, and awes the less experienced. Though thinking and learned men may themselves rest calm in the assurance that the mystery is the working of the God of nature, yet the difficulty they have in explaining their own impressions only excites the more those never accustomed to trace effects to their causes. Go read, Charles, Brattle's letter in the very midst of the rising tide of the Salem witchcraft excitement; and see how a strong, clear mind may itself rise above and personally breast the rushing, careering sweep of popular excitement, while, nevertheless, the blood is chilled with trembling anxiety for those tossed at its mercy; with whom reason and

persuasion have utterly lost their influence. Read again that letter, Charles; for we may see its reënactment. Every breath may add to the tempest brewing; every drop will add to the dashing billow. As noble Brattle, with a burning pen, quoted, "Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth!" It is a fearful responsibility to gratify one's own curiosity in following up these manifestations, at the hazard of awakening a general tendency of the popular mind which soon cannot be reasoned with or persuaded.

Glance again, then, Charles, over the historic gleanings we have gathered. Ever the same in their mysterious character have the manifestations of the spiritual medium been; tables moving, metals attracted, animals fascinated, nervous power controlling nervous power, secret thoughts wondrously telegraphed, sublime eloquence pouring from the lip and pen; all these mysteries are ever the same. Be sure there is a *law* where there is uniformity; there is a *science* where facts may be classified, though not explained. Mark, then, the danger. Observe the exciting causes, and avoid them. Beware of the advice of those absorbed in these manifestations, that you sit in mental abstraction reading books on these themes to arouse the excitement. Take the exhortation rather of good Mr. Turrell, in the Witchcraft times: "Young people now would do wisely to lay aside all their foolish books, their trifling ballads, and all romantic accounts of dreams and trances, senseless palmistry and groundless astrology."[1] If affected, Charles,

[1] Mass. Hist. Collections, vol. xx., p. 19.

by these influences, keep away from the circles, from the books, from everything that will excite it.

But there is a more important view we ought to take. It is *sinful*, as well as *perilous*, to experiment with the *established sources of knowledge* granted us by our Creator.

What injustice to ourselves, and wrong to others, we may be guilty of, by forgetting what are the sources of our knowledge! They are of *two* kinds; and he who has the one class predominating should not distrust or condemn him in whom the other sways the balance. We know what we see and others have seen, what the testimony of our senses and of the senses of others bears or has borne witness to. We know, also, what the universal intellectual and moral intuitions of men have agreed in as true. Two men of not unequal mental power may have a different mental organism; the one being more moved by things seen by the eye, the other by things pondered in the mind. Two men, equally shrewd in detecting deception, may go to the same exhibition of "mesmerism," or of the "spiritual manifestations." One may have such a nervous organism as to be easily affected; and he feels, and sees, and knows, that there is a reality in them; and no reasoning can convince him that what he knows to be true is false. The other is unsusceptible himself of that nervous excitement; or he visits "the medium," perhaps, when nervous exhaustion, or derangement, prevents the nervous development, or breaks its circle, as rain, thunder and earthquakes, dissipated it in Plutarch's day; and he

goes away thoroughly convinced that it is all delusion in the believer, if it be not deception in the practiser. Both, from their point of view, are *right;* both have truth on their side; and each should remember what are the sources of knowledge to man, and should have charity for his fellow. We add that *both* are seen to *harmonize* when these manifestations are regarded as the working of the "nervous principle."

How much knowledge should we not acquire, if we but trusted to the sources of knowledge we possess, and rightly used them! We have learned in most matters of life to trust to the established medium of gaining needed information. The man of the strongest and most cultivated mind is not ashamed to acknowledge his dependence on his gardener, his watchmaker, his physician. They may be far inferior to him in intellect; yet in their department they are skilled, and in their particular branches they are worthy to be his teachers. Now, are we qualified, by ourselves, to experiment, to gather and compare facts, and to decide that we have found a celestial science, in a field where the philosophers of every age and land have been mining, and collecting, and arranging, and seeking to find the vein of truth which underlies and unites all that has been discovered? Surely what Cousin says of mysticism, "It despairs of the regular processes of science," is true of all who think to learn anything new from these novelties. Having for a few days witnessed a few facts, they jump at a conclusion, are sure they are looking on what the world before never saw, and rashly rush to

try their skill in this fearful overtasking of their nervous energy, as heedless as a child who sets a factory-wheel in motion, or explodes fire-crackers in a powder-mill. They who learn anything by such a course will be likely to learn too much; to read too fearful a lesson. Why not leave, then, to men of science, the dangerous and arduous task, the wearing employ of making discoveries as to mysterious powers and influences? Would it be safe for you or me, Charles, to suffer our curiosity to lead us to experimenting in chemistry, in manufacturing explosive gases, or working a steam-engine? And yet, the daily practising with these mysterious manifestations of the spiritual medium is more hazardous to my delicate frame-work than tampering with retorts and steam-pipes. Ah, leave we this experimenting to men of science, trained to the work! Let a Pliny, an Agassiz, press forward first to view this agitated Vesuvius, ere we trust our young feet on the quivering crust! It may be that even they will peril themselves in the attempt; certainly we shall peril ourselves.

Perhaps it may be wise in us if we apply these principles to our inquiries after *religious* truth. Suppose that I may witness mysterious spiritual developments, if I will seek them. My body was given to be used carefully in toil for my own and my family's support; and I have no right to experiment with and overstrain my muscles; raising, for instance, to gratify my curiosity or my vanity, a heavy weight, and thus, perhaps, disabling myself for life. My mind was given me for the same and a higher end; and I dare not experiment with it.

My religious nature was given me for the highest of all ends; that I may know and serve and adore God forever, and that I may know and do my duty to my fellow-men. How can I, then, experiment with that nature?

Fearful has ever been the penalty of overlooking this responsibility, and violating this trust. When Paul wrote, "Beware, lest any man spoil you through *philosophy* and vain deceit, after the *tradition of men*, after the *rudiments of the world*, and not after Christ," he knew more than we know of the mysteries of spiritual manifestations, and of the delusion by which they would lead the mind astray. Bancroft quotes from the diary of Cotton Mather this entry, made after the witchcraft excitement, by which he was so carried away: — "Had temptations to Atheism, and to the abandonment of all religion as a delusion." No wonder! It is just what an observer of the working of minds led away by any such excitement would expect to see follow; since it always does follow. Minds that have come to rest on specious error as truth, as Paul says, "wax worse and worse, *deceiving* and *being* deceived." By allowing our intellect to get out of the path of knowledge in which our Creator has made us to walk, we may wander we know not whither; and any form of deception may seem to be true. As I value my own spiritual welfare, and as I tremble at the responsibility of misleading others, I should beware how I tempt God, by experimenting with the means he has graciously given me for gaining religious knowledge; seeking it from sources he has con-

demned and forbidden, and neglecting his sure word of prophecy.

And now, Charles, here is a book claiming to be God's revelation. Its *earliest* records, far from being penned in a rude age, before science and art and history were known, were written when all these flourished in some respects as they never have since. The man who penned its first five books had a human knowledge such as no philosopher of our day possesses. This surely cannot be an antiquated volume. Its *second* part, with all its narratives and letters, was written when Roman learning and literature was at the zenith of its perfection. It came into comparison with all the combined wisdom of the world; acquired a confidence and moral control above all the records of ages past; and became in three centuries the law of God in the world's esteem. Unlike every other professed revelation, it has not been confined in the hands of interested men; but all the people have it and study it for themselves. Unlike every other sacred book, the more it is known the more it is revered, and the nation where it is most read is the one most completely impressed with its divine authority. And, finally, (for where should we stop in such an enumeration?) the men most eminent in every branch of human knowledge, a Grotius in his, a Newton in his, a Champollion in his, a Silliman in his, a Lyell in his, have ever been most convinced that the Author of their science is the Author of this book; so celestial is the harmony between them.

In the whole range of our necessities, and of all our

established sources of meeting them, in the laws for securing health and wealth, a happy life, and individual, social and national prosperity, our Creator has given no guide at all to be compared in its certainty with this "sure word of prophecy." To it "we do well to take heed." Go not, Charles, thirsting, famishing as you are, on life's desert pilgrimage, go not to seek for the true satisfying "water of life" at those "broken cisterns" of human wisdom, which, as the ancients long since proved, can "hold no water." Rush not recklessly towards those deceiving streams, which the experience of ages has shown are only the *mirage* fluttering over the heated sands of your own mortality. Come to the *fountain* of waters, the fountain of *living* waters, once opened in Judah. Drink here, and you shall never thirst!

THE END.

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